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The Times Literary Supplement

February 3 1984 Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX

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- Cover picture: Mariya Evlaze's hand-coloured etching "The Execution", which is on show in the exhibition *Artists Under the Flag: Paintings and Drawings from World War II* at the Gillian Jason Gallery, 42 Tavistock Street, London NW1, until March 15.

February 3 1984 RUSSIA

The plunge into chaos

Geoffrey A. Hosking

ALEXANDER SOLZHENITSYN
Krasnoe koleso: Uzel 1, August chetyrnadtsatogo
(The Red Wheel: Fascicle 1, August 1914)
Volume 1-467pp, 285065 021 8.
Volume 2-546pp, 285065 022 6.
Price: YMCA Press

Some books - a very few - have a history like a geological formation. Formed under tremendous pressure, they survive the metamorphoses of ages, changing and diversifying at each upheaval in the earth's crust. This is one such. It was originally conceived, the author tells us, in Rostov-on-Don in 1937, and indeed some of the early chapters were written at that time. These then survived the years of war, arrest, imprisonment, exile, provincial isolation, sudden fame and political controversy to see the light as part of the novel *August 1914*, which Solzhenitsyn published with the YMCA Press in Paris in 1971 (reviewed in the TLS on October 15, 1971). Now that novel has undergone further transformations, the result of Solzhenitsyn's exile to the West and the deeper research which this has made possible into the history of the Russian Revolution. Its thousand pages are, moreover, only the first uzel (fascicle) in a huge cycle of novels covering that revolution - a cycle which, if completed, is likely to make Solzhenitsyn's ventures in the same field (also conceived not far from Rostov-on-Don) seem like mere miniatures.

The basic conception underlying the novel, however, has not undergone any changes. It has merely been filled out and clarified by Solzhenitsyn's historical research. In the first version of *August 1914* the milling engineer Arkhangorodsky predicted a great future for Russia, based on the economic development of the immense untapped resources of Siberia, as well as on the country's human potential. Russia's population, he calculated, would be 30 million by 1950. "That is", he added cautiously, "if we don't start disembowelling each other first."

Solzhenitsyn's concern is to explain why this great vision remained unrealized, why the country's economic growth took place in a lopsided and debilitating manner, why Siberia remained relatively undeveloped, and above all why Russians started disembowelling each other in great numbers. The roots of all this he sees in the revolution of 1917, and therefore in

the events which led up to it. His narrative and historical method is to take the decisive turning-points and explain them from all sides. The result is the "fascicle", which he describes as a "dense, all-round exposition of the events of a brief time span".

In its new form, this particular "fascicle" centres on two such events, the murder of the prime minister, Stolypin, at the Kiev Opera House, on September 1, 1911, and the outbreak of the First World War. These two events, Solzhenitsyn evidently believes, broke off Russia's peaceful development and plunged her into the chaos which made the Bolshevik revolution possible. The war was utterly opposed to Russia's real interests, and the country should never have been drawn into it. That it was drawn in Solzhenitsyn attributes, on the evidence of his long new historical excursion (which nearly doubles the novel's original length), to the fact that the statesman who had Russia's real interests at heart, the man who had the strength and perspicacity to avoid false entanglements - namely Stolypin - was dead. Solzhenitsyn shows us the Emperor Nicholas II pacing up and down the room of his palace on the agonizing day in July 1914 when he is being urged, against his better judgment, to order general mobilization. He reflects bitterly on the incompetence and unreliability of all his ministers and generals. "He did not have a single firm, intelligent, outstanding individual who would take the responsibility and the decision-making on himself, and would say: 'no! this way and no other!' But there was such a man once - Stolypin! That's who he needed right here, right now - Stolypin!"

Solzhenitsyn therefore turns to a "dense, all-round exposition" of the events leading up to Stolypin's murder. His assassin was a police agent and somewhat questionable revolutionary, Dmitri Bogrov. Bogrov is everything Solzhenitsyn despises. Privileged and rich, son of a successful barrister, and about to take up the same career, he is temporarily idle as young barristers are, but not penniless, as many have to be. Bogrov sticks to the narcissistic and destructive dreams of the terrorists of 1905-6; only unlike them he refuses to be bound hand and foot by political parties and their central committees. He believes that only a heroic and determined individual can defeat the system and reach the "central" targets, the ones that really matter. That this man was admitted to the Kiev Opera House (where not only Stolypin but also

the Emperor himself were among the spectators), with a revolver in his pocket, has always puzzled historians. His entrance pass was given to him by N. N. Kulyabko, head of the Kiev department of the Okhrana (the Tsar's security police), on the strength of Bogrov's story that he was going to keep an eye on a group of terrorists who were preparing an attempt on Stolypin's life. Solzhenitsyn maintains that Kulyabko was unaccustomed to having such an intelligent and socially distinguished secret agent on his books, and was simply flattered by Bogrov. Even more mysterious, though, is the fact that the issue of the pass was approved by P. G. Kurolov, Assistant Minister of the Interior, and head of the Empire's entire police network: he had come down from St Petersburg to oversee security during the festivities in Kiev. No one searched Bogrov when he entered the theatre, in spite of his avowed connections with revolutionaries, and no one tailed him; nor did anyone make an independent check on the story about the terrorist group.

These elementary oversights imply incompetence on such a mind-boggling scale that many historians (myself included) have felt inclined to hypothesize at least a degree of complicity on the part of Kurolov and Kulyabko in Stolypin's murder. Stolypin was known to distrust Kurolov, who in turn felt that Stolypin had blocked his career. Besides, Stolypin was by now very unpopular at court, especially among the senior advisers and officials, who felt displaced by the new constitutional system of government he was gradually making effective. Even the new legislative chambers, the Duma and the State Council, were not supporting Stolypin at the time, since he had recently treated them rather brusquely over a bill to introduce elective local government in the western provinces of the Empire. Perhaps Kurolov had grounds for believing that Stolypin's sudden death would not be too closely investigated. Certainly, in the event it was not: a senatorial inquiry produced material for charges of criminal negligence to be preferred against Kurolov and Kulyabko, but the Emperor, against the advice of Stolypin's successor, Kokovtsev, ordered that the case be dropped. As for Bogrov, he was secretly tried and executed with indecent haste, before the senators could question him.

Solzhenitsyn does not actually accuse Kurolov and Kulyabko of complicity in the crime. All he does maintain is that they were preoccupied

with other matters more conducive to their personal advancement than guarding a premier who would probably soon have to resign anyway, and that they simply neglected to take basic precautions. To me this explanation does not quite hang together. Do security policemen have any tasks more urgent or more career-enhancing than protecting the monarch and the prime minister? But Solzhenitsyn advances his interpretation with his customary verbal panache and insight into the minds of people of widely differing backgrounds and persuasions. The explanation fits into his view - already clear in the first version of *August 1914* - of a modernizing, developing Russia being first held back and then ground down by two conflicting reactionary forces, the Black Hundreds and the Red Hundreds, as he calls them: idle high society from above, and the revolutionaries from below. Bogrov epitomizes both.

Stolypin, absent from the first version of the novel, has now become the hero of *August 1914*. An examination of his political career takes up the longest and most significant of the historical expositions filling out the body of the book. Solzhenitsyn sees Stolypin as the bearer of a renewed patriotic Russian consciousness, courageous in braving the assassin's bullet, determined in suppressing revolution, creative and far-sighted in his plans for reform. Taking the constitution which a nervous Witte (then prime minister) had hastily thrust on the Emperor at the height of the 1905 revolution, Stolypin set about actually trying to make it work, drawing the new legislative chambers into business-like activity instead of vapid speech-making, and fashioning them into a permanent part of the machinery of state. As Solzhenitsyn puts it, "he took the Duma more seriously than the Duma deputies themselves". He also intended to strengthen the local government assemblies - the zemstvos - and make them more responsive to local opinion by widening their franchise and removing some of the official tutelage which had hitherto impeded their freedom of action.

Most important of all Stolypin's reform projects was the dissolution of the traditional peasant land tenure, vested in the village commune, and its replacement by private peasant smallholdings. For Solzhenitsyn, the continuing dominance of the commune in the countryside was an example *par excellence* of the unholy symbiosis of reactionaries and revolutionaries. The reactionaries liked the

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commune because it guaranteed that peasants would stay put, pay their taxes and not become landless vagrants or "sturdy beggars", a threat to law and order. The revolutionaries liked it because its arrangements for periodic compulsory land redistribution and mutual social security constituted a kind of primitive socialism, and might enable the peasants to proceed to the real thing without going through the horrors of capitalism. Stolypin, however, felt that the peasants would never respect other people's property until they had full property rights of their own: they would continue to hanker after other people's land, and to burn manor houses till they got it.

That was Stolypin's chief thought: that you can't create a law-abiding society without independent citizens — and that, in Russia, meant peasants... The abstract right to freedom without the genuine freedom of the peasantry was mere "ravage on the corpse". Russia could not become a strong nation whilst its major social class had no stake in the system.

Altogether, Stolypin's political programme had some striking resemblances to the one Solzhenitsyn published in 1974, when he made known his *Letter to the Soviet leaders*: both place great emphasis on private property, encouragement of industry, peasant resettlement in Siberia (which Stolypin promoted to good effect) and on peaceful Russian patriotism, avoiding all unnecessary international entanglements.

Historically speaking, Solzhenitsyn's admiration for Stolypin is well founded. There is no doubt, in my view, that Stolypin was the outstanding Russian statesman of the early twentieth century, and for precisely the reasons Solzhenitsyn puts forward. What is disturbing, however, about his historical exposition is a lack of nuance, the absence of any sense of the complexity of events: this distorts and flattens Solzhenitsyn's vision both as historian and as novelist. Take, for example, the assertion that Stolypin was determined to preserve Russia's new parliament and to consolidate its powers. I believe it to be correct on the whole, but there is no doubt that Stolypin himself undermined the Duma's authority by enacting a number of major reforms, including the cardinal act "On Withdrawal from the Commune", under emergency legislation, while the chambers were adjourned. A law which radically changes a centuries-old institution cannot be called

"emergency legislation", as many members of the Duma indignantly pointed out. Solzhenitsyn argues that the agrarian reform was urgently needed, and that the Duma would debate it for years. Quite true: in other words, there was a genuine dilemma, and it distorts the complexity of historical trends to make out that there was a simple and obvious answer which could only be resisted by the ill-willed.

Or take the case of local government reform. Very little came of Stolypin's intentions in this area. But the reason was not purely, as Solzhenitsyn states, that the left-wing members of the Duma, the "freedom-loving defenders of the people", squashed them with the help of the reactionary right. On the contrary, those local government proposals which Stolypin actually brought before the Duma were passed by it. The difficulty lay elsewhere: with the independent landowners of central Russia, whose co-operation Stolypin was seeking for his agrarian programme. They feared that their influence in the new zemstvos would be diminished, as would indeed have been the case, since the new electoral law was more democratic — i.e. less favourable to them — and their representatives, the Marshals of the Nobility, would no longer have the automatic right to select the chairmen of the assemblies. Because of opposition from these provincial nobles, Stolypin never even brought the reform of the upper-tier zemstvos before the Duma. As for the bill to set up a lower-tier zemstvo, at the level of the *volost* (roughly equivalent to the former English rural district council), that was actually passed by the Duma, with some amendments, but rejected in the upper house, the State Council, where many provincial nobles voted against it. Their contribution was decisive to its defeat: those whom Solzhenitsyn normally calls "the spheres" (the court, the pre-1905 bureaucrats, the police officials) were not numerous enough in the State Council to sink it on their own.

Solzhenitsyn, in fact, does not give enough attention to the political and social forces which *supported* Stolypin, and which found difficulties with some elements of his programme. The image he projects is of Stolypin, almost alone as the bearer of progress and national honour, fighting a brave but unavailing battle. The whole account is melodramatic, concentrates too much on the assassination, and misses the complexities which constitute

the true drama of history.

The same weakness vitiates Solzhenitsyn's achievement as a novelist. In *The First Circle* or *Cancer Ward*, he shows a gift for letting us see reality in the round, through the eyes of individuals of very different character and outlook. His language contributes to this three-dimensional effect, through its vivid epithets, its archaisms and neologisms, its personalized vocabulary, its subtle modulations of direct and indirect speech. In both novels it is clear enough what the author himself is trying to say, but he does not actually put a personal representative on stage to say it for him. Nerzhin's world-view is laid out in counterpoint with Rubin's, and the reader responds to the total effect.

Already in the first version of *August 1914* much of this "polyphony" had been lost in the author's evident readiness to interperse his own spokesmen among the *dramatis personae*. Now the addition of a large historical section has made the problem worse. As though uncertain he is getting his point across, Solzhenitsyn has marked out parts of the new section in small type, and there he quite simply addresses the reader as historian or Olympian narrator, instructing him what to think. Here the language of subjectivity, which Solzhenitsyn has mastered so magnificently, is merely annoying. Significantly, to the techniques of first and third-person narration, which he has deployed elsewhere, he now occasionally adds that of *second-person* narration, a highly unusual mode (also employed in *The Gulag Archipelago*), whose aim appears to be to compel the reader linguistically to identify with the character then holding the stage. Some readers may feel inclined to resist the compulsion.

Nevertheless, *August 1914* contains, as it did before, many compelling and vivid pages, especially those on General Samsonov, the peasant Blagodaryov, and the staff officer Colonel Vorotyntsev, who between them personify Russia's greatness and her tragedy. These pages, taken on their own, are among the finest things Solzhenitsyn has written. In the new version, too, he has added a graphic and, to my mind, very convincing portrait of Nicholas II. So there are many good things in this book. But as history and as art *August 1914* remains seriously flawed, and the addition of more history has highlighted the flaws of the art.

Unlike some of his journalist colleagues in Moscow, Binyon did not have much contact with "dissidents", sympathetic though he was with their struggle for legal rights, for which they are often condemned as common criminals at rigged trials. He rather felt that more attention should be paid to people pressing for change within the system (a group about which relatively little is known abroad). He was able to get on friendly terms with some individual Russians but found it "infinitely harder" to understand their way of thinking. As, in his experience, most Russians cannot imagine that their country could do anything unacceptable to the rest of the world, this impasse is not surprising. But one wonders if this show of excessive patriotism was not designed to impress Binyon. His contacts with officials of the dreaded KGB were surprisingly friendly. He found that this organization attracts some of the brightest talent in the country and numbers among its members "the most urbane, intelligent and sophisticated officials."

Binyon's scrutiny of Yuri Andropov's first period of rule as head of the Soviet Party and State is unusually discerning. Andropov, in his view, met the daunting problems confronting him in the lagging economy with insight and determination. His resolve to rid the administration of inefficiency and slackness and to pose firm control at the top resulted in a crack down on Party and Soviet officials, "dozens of elderly and incompetent bureaucrats" being sacked. Ordinary Soviet citizens were also affected by Andropov's disciplinary measures, including "regular raids on shops, cinemas and 'hardcore' to catch the thousands who were 'skiving from work'". Binyon, however, wonders how far Soviet life has actually been changed by Andropov's policies.

Dinging and donging

Wilfrid Mellers

PERCIVAL PRICE
Jelly and Man
289p, Oxford University Press. £12.95.
019381037

In remarking that "had everybody such chimneys would be turned into friends and everyone would live in the most beautiful harmony" Pygmalion, Mozart's late eighteenth-century Child of Nature, was echoing the common view of bells from the dark backward and ahym of time through many thousands of years. Both real bells (inverted cups, usually of metal, hit with some kind of attached clapper or externally activated hammer) and crotals (hollowed gourd-like objects with a free body — pea or pebble — inserted) may be said to belong to that in that they reveal the acoustical properties of Nature. This learned, ably written and amply illustrated book informs us that some 26,000 years before Christ the Chinese emperor Chuan Hao "struck the bell and called the attention of the people, so that he could teach them righteousness". Chinese bells were decorated with dragons and other fabulous beasts lest demons should threaten the transcendental power whereby bells sustained the Universal Harmony: for without truly resonating bells the universe might collapse. Most ancient oriental cultures regarded bells in a similar spirit. Hindus found in them the circle, hemisphere and lotus basic to their cosmology, and saw in the relation of drum to bell the immortal symbolism of sword and chalice. In Burma, Asia and Japan, bell and drum were likewise incarnations of yin and yang. While flower-like crotals represented apotropaic forces. With all these peoples the consecrated bell "affects gods and informs mortals", with meanings normally benevolent but occasionally malevolent, according to who strikes it, how and when. And although in African and Latin American cultures bells tend to be less ritually solemn, more directly associated with dance and ritual action, they always function in a religious context.

Even in the old oriental cultures, however, the power of bells has declined over the centuries. Little Japanese girls still dance with the *manji* or "crotal tree" as waistband, adding its musical angle to their visually glittering garments, but they would be surprised to learn that the purpose of the crotal tree was to lure the sun goddess Amaterasu from the Cave of Heaven. Similarly, bells which in ancient Hindu and Chinese cultures were employed as agents for converse with the gods now summon millions to the desks of government officials, or instigate mass exultations at closing time in theatres and museums. Not that the sacred report of bells obliterated, even in old cultures, more practical uses. In India bells attached to cows not only paid tribute to a sacred animal; they also helped to locate its presence, and there was economic as well as religious advantage in the fact that the better beast had the better bell. Muslims were singular in allowing bells to be used only for practical ends; as religious objects they were suspect since their ringings cluttered air-space better devoted to prayer. This suspicion at first spilled over into Christian Europe, St Paul dismissing the "tinkling bell" along with the sounding cymbal as *theatrical* appearances of the heathen.

By about 400 A.D., however, bells had been introduced, reputedly at the instigation of St Paulinus of Nola, as a call to Christian worship and as protection against demonic forces. Christ's apocryphal "knocking at the door" was analogized in three stages: the wooden *semantron*, representing the Old Testament prophets, the clanking entrance bell, representing the New Testament Gospels, and the *manji* bell itself as the trumpet of the Last Days. From the eleventh century onwards, Christian bells proliferated copiously and rapidly from monastery to parish church, where they came to serve secular as well as sacred functions. Curfew and angelus had civic significance in controlling social behaviour, as well as spiritual significance in (negatively) controlling things that go bump in the night, and (positively) paying homage to the Virgin Mary. Bells now indicated not only the progress of the liturgy and of the Church year but also the diurnal cycle of town and village activities. Soon bells erected in ecclesiastical buildings had rival owners in church and state, and fulfilled interrelated social, political and military as well as religious purposes. This multiplicity of function was extended when religious buildings were complemented by civic guild-halls, the bells of which regulated the commercial calendar. It is difficult to imagine the campanological hullabaloo within which medieval and early Renaissance folk lived. Large and middle-sized bells informed and instructed them in a vast diversity of divine and civic duties from the rising of the sun to its setting; tiny bells attached to the clothing of priests, courtiers, jesters and even common people provided an incessant aural halo to their human occupations, from the most hallowed to the most mundane.

The beginning of the end of the bell-cosmos occurs when, as the Renaissance prospers, bells become explicit chronometers, measuring time essential for commercial intercourse, instead of affirming its triviality in the sight of God. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries increasingly elaborate mechanical contrivances — artificial men who mark time by a clockwork hammering — denature and demagize bells in making them play our tunes rather than their own, or God's. Originally most bells had at least sought affinity with those wind-bells which produce natural partials in response to the air's God-directed buffet or caress. At the onset of the scientific revolution mathematician-philosophers like Mersenne and Descartes offer blueprints for the acoustical properties of carillons, indicating how man could intellectually control their forging and ultimately their mass-manufacture. The process ends with the bells that tinkle "Rudolph, the Red-nosed Reindeer" in our Christmastide emporia, and in the chiming competitions organized by American churches, not for the glory of God nor even to remind men of social and agricultural obligations, but in competition with rival churches: the most sophisticated chimings, by our fallible human standards, attract the most customers, and therefore the most fairly filthy lucre.

A theme which Percival Price does not touch on, though he might profitably have done so, is the use made of bells by "art" composers as distinct from those medieval and Renaissance musicians still involved with bells as ecclesiastical or civic ritual. In the eighteenth century Bach still called on bells, with defined theological connotations, funerary or nuptial. But he was an old-fashioned composer, and by the end of the century Enlightened men had little artistic truck with these magical instruments. Mozart's Papageno is the exception that proves the rule, since his bells were an implicit criticism of eighteenth-century Rationality. Less directly, the same is true of the bell-sounds which Beethoven, in his last three piano sonatas, emanated by way of multiple trills which disperse "Western" harmonic consciousness. Later composers who employ bells or bell-like sonorities do so from similar motivation, and most of them were interested in non-Western, oriental musics. One thinks of Debussy and his successors, Messiaen, Varèse and Cage, not to mention relatively "advanced" pop groups like Tubular Bells and Tangerine Dream.

Strictly speaking, tubes and electrophonic resonators are not bells at all, any more than is Beethoven's pianoforte: which may justify Price's omission of them. But if one concentrates on the ritualistic rather than artistic significance of bells in relation to man one has to admit, on the evidence of this beautiful book, that their story, chronologically considered, reflects little credit on the human race. Passing bell and death-knell, which had imbued medieval people with the terror of mortality, but also with a sense of human achievement, have for us been irremediably trivialized; even our carillons of jubilation, bereft of magical power, come across only as a "resounding tinny noise". But we shouldn't be too hard on ourselves. The sexton who in a remote village fairly recently expressed pride in having, through his expert bell-chiming, diverted a tenant from his own to a neighbour's village must have had past precedents for such un-Christian behaviour. Ungenerosity of spirit is not peculiar to ages of unfaith.

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Words of the wanderers

John A. C. Greppin

TATYANA V. VENTZEL
The Gypsy Language
Translated by S. S. Gitman
104pp. Moscow: Nauka. 80 kopecks.

In this compact monograph Tatyana Ventzel reviews the grammar and historical position of the Gypsy language, the tongue of a landless people dimly understood and rarely appreciated who have produced in their 1,500 years of wandering no monument to their culture, whether material or literary. In fact their past can be traced only through their living language, and even this is difficult. As Ventzel shows, their language (or perhaps one should say languages) is so permeated by loan elements derived from the cultures within which they live that a Gypsy begging around the railway-station in downtown Helsinki would be hard put to communicate with a kinsperson selling Western chewing-gum by the stick in Yerevan, Soviet Armenia.

The Gypsy language is an Indic language, most closely related to such other living languages of North-west India as Hindi, Punjabi or Gujarati. The self-designation of the European Gypsy is *Rom*, and their language is called *Romany*. This has nothing to do with Latin, for in the Armenian Gypsy language the word is *Lom* while in the Palestinian dialect we have *Dòm* - various forms of an original word that was cognate with Sanskrit *domba*, the designation for a person of a low caste earning a living as a singer or dancer.

The English word "Gypsy" entered our language around 1550 AD and is a permutation of "Egyptian" since Egypt was once believed to be the homeland of the Gypsies. The other common European word for the Gypsies is based on the root *Tsigan* (German. *Zigeuner*, Russian *Tsygan*) the source of which is obscure but should be taken with Medieval Greek *atsigianos* "Gypsy" from, perhaps, an earlier *atsigianos* "heretic living in Phrygia and Lycaonia". The English noun *inker-ban* (ink-ban) (heretic, or household item) has long been taken as a cognate of the root *Tsigan* but this is unlikely since the Gypsies didn't reach England until the sixteenth century while the word *tyneker* is first met in the English written language by the year 1265.

The Gypsy language has gone through many permutations since its Indic origin and an accumulation of almost bizarre sound-shifts has left only a few words recognizable. *Gypsy dand* "tooth" comes close to our Latin *dentur*; the correspondence between *Gypsy* *ai* and English *thou* is clear, as is *Gypsy* *ray* "king", cognate with Sanskrit *raja*; the number for "five" is *panj*, the equivalent of Hindi *pāñch* "five", from which we got the English word "punch", a beverage originally with that number of elements in it; *Gypsy kam* "love, desire" is recalled in the title of the Sanskrit erotic narrative the *Kāma Sūtra*; and *Gypsy manus* easily approaches English "man". These and other Indic words compose the core vocabulary; after this, multitudinous loanwords from a very wide variety of languages have made a strong impact. Many come from Iranian sources and we can recognize "bakshish" in *Gypsy bakhi* "happiness"; Romanian contributed *Gypsy rota* "wheel"; German gave *fenshtira* "window" and *berg* "mountain"; and there are even Armenian elements. The Gypsy dialect spoken in Wales has words from three Slavic, two Romance and two Germanic languages as well as generous dollops from Persian, Greek and Armenian. These loans begin to assume monstrous proportions and even words for numbers, part of the most basic and cherished component of a language, along with terms for family relationships, have been replaced. The Gypsy word for "seven" is now *ete*, from Greek *epi*; *Gypsy trianta* "thirty" comes from a variant of the same source.

The Gypsies are known from the year 1100 in South-east Europe, and these European Gypsies represent that part of the original *Romany* group which, after leaving India, eventually veered North-west into the higher latitudes, leaving behind forever a group that turned south and pushed on to Egypt and farther into North Africa. As a people they have assimilated most reluctantly; their total number is not known and estimates have run from

2½ million to over 7 million and even up to 12 million. There is no way to be sure. Sources tell us with some confidence that there are 200,000 Gypsies in Hungary, 150,000 in Czechoslovakia, and 160,000 in Yugoslavia; Ventzel can say with equal confidence that the Russian census of 1979 numbered Soviet Gypsies at 209,000.

The Gypsies of eastern Europe and the Soviet Union are divided into two groups, the Northern, which includes the Baltic and Germanic sub-groups, and the Southern, comprising the Ukrainian, Balkan, Vlach (Moldavian) and Carpathian sub-groups. Ventzel's monograph concentrates on the Baltic sub-group of the Northern dialects and it is their vocabulary (with such borrowed words as *revolusiya*, *sozializma* and *traktor*), morphology and syntax which she concentrates on. For reasons that are not entirely clear she scarcely acknowledges the Armenian Gypsies, surely one of the oldest and most closely-knit of the Gypsy confederations. They were most recently the subject of a thorough study by Charles Dowsett, who reconfirmed that they are clearly a group distinct from those in Europe and in the Middle East. In fact, Dowsett even questions whether the name "Armenian Gypsy" is correct, for so Armenized is their language that he suggests it might better be called "Gypsy Armenian".

Ventzel does not consider the Armenian Gypsy language a true form of Gypsy, but rather, like the Gypsy spoken in Central Asia (Lyuli), and partially the language of the British and Spanish Gypsies (she does not comment on the language of the estimated 200,000 American Gypsies), the language has lost its true Gypsy identification and has become hopelessly mixed. But all the Gypsy dialects spoken in different countries have, in addition to their idiosyncratic innovations, their archaisms as well. Albanian Gypsy has retained such a word as *lindra* "sleep" (Sanskrit *nindra*) while the Russian Gypsies have *soibé* (Hindi *soné* "sleep"). But in spite of these various retentions, the Gypsies, finding it increasingly difficult to live a migratory life and maintain their language, are slowly losing their last clear means of self-identification. Ventzel records that the North-Russian dialects are poor, lacking what would seem to be indispensable words for their migrant life, "such as names of trees, berries, mushrooms, flowers, beasts and birds as well as terms denoting various abstract notions".

Slowly they are being absorbed and eventually, without a spokesman in the UN or a parcel of land they can historically claim, they will be gone. Their principal trace will be in the grammar-books, where their language was recorded by non-Gypsy scholars.

Friction

Resistance, the hum of ohms, the coiled wire
cries out in its vacuum, in the too-powerful bulb.

Our silence is irksome and confrontational.
As you sit across from me, I could wish you away:

turning the pages of a book, your pen grinding
on my paper - I quarrel with each manifestation.

Your new dress is in an older, plainer style,
belled but voluminous. It would double for pregnancy.

Asleep, motorized, tidal, you drive me to the wall.
Each cycle you complete is a waste of youth,

a chemical sadness. The time passes. Doesn't love
entail risks? We hope, pretend, take precautions.

Amplitude is for the future, it needs confidence.
I stay on home ground - cageyness, stasis, enqui-

but even that untenable. When you left me again,
I took out a pipe-cleaner and caught a drop of air

on its thin, fleecy tip -

as if that caused the impediment!

MICHAEL HOFMANN



Carib boys, photographed in Guyana by Sir Everard Im Thurn (1852-1932) and included in the exhibition *Observers of Man: Photographs from the Royal Anthropological Institute at the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford until March 25.*

Caribbeanspeak

Edward Kamau Brathwaite

JOHN A. HOLM and ALISON WATT SHILLING
Dictionary of Bahamian English
228pp. Cold Spring, NY: Lexik House. \$42.
0936368 039

It is hard to believe that less than twenty-five years ago the "ruling" concept of Caribbean English was that it was bad, brutish and broken - Caliban's idiosyncrasy, as it were. The ideal was to speak and write the Queen's English, towards which, as V. S. Naipaul's early novels illustrate, we struggled most creatively. But even our most creative efforts, the Caribbeanspeak as set down by our novelists, were for a long time looked on with scant enthusiasm by our teachers, who saw "The calypsonian" and *In the Castle of my Skin*, for example, as attempts to undermine all that they had been trying to inculcate via Fowler's *Modern English Usage* and the "classical" constructions of Macaulay and Maugham. And I can still remember the superciliousness among some of those who called themselves "linguists" (or something like that) at the appearance of Frank Collymore's *Notes for a Glossary of Words and*

Phrases of Barbadian Dialect in 1955.

Soon, however, the "problem" shifted from the fact of Caribbean English (or dialect) to its origin. And here again, in the light of all that has happened since, it is difficult to reconstruct a credible history, even though it is the standard history of colonial value systems and thought. With Collymore's *Glossary*, and with the professional, academic (and loving) *Jamaica Talk* by F. G. Cassidy which appeared in 1961, it was becoming pretty clear that persistent "errors" in Caribbean English were not the result of slow-wittedness and/or the inability to "cope", but (perhaps) derived from the presence, within the tongue's mind, of linguistic systems other than Queen Victoria's - like, say, Ashanti Twi or Yoruba, or even Kikongo. Like *nyam*, or *out it out*, or *one teeth*, or *a mite* or *eye-water*. Wasn't *nyam* heard throughout West Africa? And couldn't *eye-water* be a translation of the Igbo *ana-mmiri* or the Yoruba *omi oju* or the Twi *ani-suo*, in the same way that "carry go bring come", "hurry up back" and "de man-dem" made more and more sense as we got to know other African-based creole languages better? Yet at a Caribbean Linguistics Conference at Mona in 1963, some of the scholars present were still hotly denying the notion of an African provenance for Caribbean language-use in favour, believe it or not, of Celtic, Gaelic and even Serbo-Croat. In other words, not so long ago, we were anxious and willing, in the full face of our history and geography, to ascribe a context and matrix for our English which was not only unscientific, but uncomplimentary and insulting, both to ourselves and to the genius of the language itself.

Happily all that is behind us now and we have had, almost as if in compensation, a whole series of Caribbean Language studies, of which John Holm and Alison Watt Shilling's *Dictionary of Bahamian English* is an excellent example. It is, as Holm acknowledges, modelled on the first classic of its kind; F. G. Cassidy and Robert Le Page's *Dictionary of Jamaican English*; but it also reflects the continuing sophistication of creole language studies (employing the concept of cultural transference/transmission/interaction to create new forms in a new context) in that it employs not only a wider and more confident attribution of African presence than ever before, but is able to draw upon the resources represented by the OED plus a wide range of Atlantic, North American (including Gullah, Plantation, contemporary, slang and underworld), Caribbean (including Lucayan, Afro-Seminole, Bermudian, Haitian and Jamaican) and Central American forms, in addition, of course, to the catalysing action of Krio and Portuguese creole, to create this 5,500 word entry work. Like the *DJE* before it, it is not only a definitive lexicon, but because of its concern with the social aspects of its study, makes an important contribution to creole language studies as well.

The challenge of complexity

N. M. Horsfall

COLIN MACLEOD
Collected Essays
Edited by Oliver Taplin
Oxford: Clarendon Press. £20.
0911005 8

The author of these essays, Colin Macleod, took his own life two years ago, at the age of fifty-eight. The bitterness of that loss is undiminished: I write undisturbed, as a friend, but friendship did not blur the objectivity of Colin Macleod's own criticism and he would have deplored such blurring in others. The collection's editor, Oliver Taplin, has included all his articles, down to the shortest notes, and additionally a moving obituary of Colin Macleod's beloved and revered teacher, Edward Fraenkel. Nothing trivial or ephemeral obtrudes. Even had all these papers been easy of access, affection for the man, and, inseparably, respect for the scholar would have justified their collection. In fact, several papers are rescued from relative obscurity, two lectures are added and the author's own marginalia and misprints are collected in a valuable appendix.

A list of reviews is added and one could wish that at least a sample had been included here: this is where some of Colin Macleod's best and sharpest writing is to be found and where he preferred to make explicit some of his guiding principles in the interpretation of ancient literature. They also illuminate, in a way the articles do not, his attitude to his teachers, his conception of his own place in classical studies, his intellectual development. But the present collection is rich and rewarding enough.

That Colin Macleod was a pupil of Fraenkel and of G. W. Williams is constantly apparent: what is new is the formidable rigour and clarity of his analyses, notably of notorious problem poems, such as Catullus 68 and Horace, *Epist.* 1.19. The harder the text, the more valuable was his contribution likely to be. Faint lines of what he might have gone on to do for

Sophocles and Virgil also emerge. He "stoutly refused", as he says of Fraenkel, "to become either a 'Latinist' or a 'Hellenist'". The range of these essays is awesome; but even beyond the authors whom he expounds (notably, Homer, Aeschylus, Thucydides, Catullus, Propertius, Horace and Gregory of Nyssa, this last being the topic of his D Phil thesis, never completed, but a lasting stimulus), the reader will discern intimate familiarity with much of (eg) Plato, Aristotle, Origen, Clement, and ancient treatises on rhetorical theory.

It is a particularly helpful characteristic of these essays that Colin Macleod was able to identify and label the stages and twists of an argument with a terminology that the ancient authors would have recognized: as a critic he never sought to impose himself, but rather to understand from within, through simultaneous study of words and analysis of argument, what Thucydides or Horace were themselves trying to achieve. Dionysius of Halcarnassus, a talented critic writing in Augustan Rome, found Thucydides' analysis of faction (3.82-3) obscure and stylistically objectionable; Colin Macleod's vindication of the historian's language and intentions is a remarkable piece of sympathetic reading. Had I to suggest a possible weakness of approach, I sensed at times a reluctance (inherited) to come to grips with the detailed public background of some Horatian poems: thus the problematic events of the Actium campaign and Horace's part in them demand a more cautious and complex treatment: there at least our understanding of the poetry turns on precise historical details.

To give some idea of the actual contents: first, in Greek, the unpublished "Homer on Poetry and the Poetry of Homer", whose emphasis on the *Odyssey* complements the preface to his edition of *Iliad* 24; the formidable analysis of "Politics in the Oresteia", challenging E. R. Dodds' reading of the trilogy as reflecting Aeschylus' judgment of the political issues precisely of the time of composition, and a sextet of related papers on Thucydides. With the help of an admirable subject-index, these

papers virtually constitute a book of their own, illuminating successively some of the historian's very hardest and most significant passages (the analysis of faction, the Platean and Mitylenean debates, the Melian dialogue). Second, in Latin, six slighter but consistently sane and suggestive papers on Catullus and Propertius, introducing a splendidly substantial contribution to Horatian studies, notably four papers on the ethical content of selected *Odes* and *Epistles*. These discussions are always firmly anchored in meticulous discussion of individual poems or parts thereof, "to bring out their meaning and coherence", through the subtlest discussion of the intellectual content and the developing argument. Third, the studies of Gregory of Nyssa and the language of Christian mysticism which suggest a deep and perhaps envious curiosity about such belief.

The coherence of this superficially disparate body of work is remarkable: it is informed throughout by a striking unity of method and outlook. Thus the study of imagery governs the exposition of the argument in Aeschylus, Horace and Gregory alike, much as the analysis of key words and very fine detailed stylistic observations guide the reader to a clearer understanding of characterization, moral outlook and intellectual coherence in Thucydides' speeches. A remarkably delicate ear for recurring themes and ideas, far beyond mere verbal echoes, distinguishes the entire book, as does a passionate concern with ethics. The presentation of Horace as a poet seriously concerned with ethical problems is striking and possibly sometimes exaggerated. Closely comparable is the exegesis of Thucydides' presentation of the moral issues present in the minds of the participants in the Peloponnesian War. Outstanding in this respect is "Rhetoric and History"; no sneaking admiration for Alcibiades can survive this blistering analysis of Thucydides' presentation of his moral bankruptcy and repeated resort to deliberately fallacious and inconsistent arguments.

The first publications date from 1969; over

the next twelve years his output was copious and wide-ranging, despite the heavy demands of tutoring and lecturing, whereby he also earned an exceptional reputation as a teacher. I have heard undergraduates say that his were the best lectures on ancient literature going: not the most fun, just the best. That explains much. His writings, the patristic papers aside, very clearly grew out of his teaching: nearly thirty articles, some of the best reviews, the edition of *Iliad* 24 and the annotated translation of Horace's *Epistles* for whose publication we may hope, are all concerned with central authors regularly prescribed for Mods or the literary option in Greats. "Teaching has allowed me", he wrote, "to explore my ignorance and pick at my confusions." Taplin justly describes the method as Socratic. One registers a strong preference for complex authors and their hardest passages; this is largely a book of untravelling problems and the reader will accept gratefully the threads provided to trace new paths through many notorious labyrinths. If these essays are seldom easy reading, and indeed verge sometimes on the downright difficult, that reflects an uncompromising refusal to glide easily round the tremendous difficulties of language and thought in the texts studied.

Here is the finest exegete of classical literature of his generation, an assertion he would never himself have ventured to contemplate; so much so, that one misses the fizz of excitement which his remarkable mastery of his matter could so easily and justifiably have lent to his exposition. Genius so unadorned risks neglect. A proper delight in the force and ingenuity of his own solutions appears only in some of the shorter papers. This is almost entirely a book for the specialist reader. Colin's concern with historical texts, ethical arguments and the best authors bears unanswerable testimony to the traditional range and continuing excellence of Oxford's *Literae Humaniores*. But this splendid collection will serve, to those who persevere, as an inspiration far beyond the circle of those who knew and loved its author.

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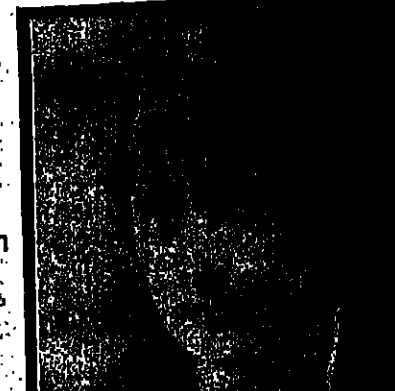
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554pp. Allen and Unwin. £60.
0049200674

The announced aim of the editors of Russell's collected papers – which will ultimately run to many volumes – is to include, apart from personal letters, "all the shorter writings that record his own thoughts, whether or not they have been previously published". Practically all the material in the present volume was written by him between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four. It ranges in content from the thoughts about God, freedom and immortality which engaged him in 1888-9 to a few papers and reviews concerning the *a priori* element in geometry which he published as a newly elected Fellow of Trinity in 1896. The substantially qualified Kantianism of these last he came later to reject; but the painfully won scepticism of the first remained with him always. "In all things I have made the vow to follow reason", writes the fifteen-year-old; but, in order to avoid distressing his "people", he writes it, and the sceptical conclusions to which it led him, in the decent obscurity of Greek characters.

These "Greek Exercises", and a notebook of essays written at the crammer which Russell attended to prepare for the scholarship examination at Trinity, together make up Part 1 of this volume. The reasonings, in both Exercises and Essays, though unremarkable in themselves, evidence an intellectual precocity which is truly remarkable; and the clarity and conciseness of their expression show that Russell arrived at his mature style almost as soon as he began to write.

These follow, in Part 2, the "Locked Diary" which Russell kept, intermittently between 1890 and 1894 and which is chiefly of interest

for its references to his courtship of Alys Pearsall Smith. There is a certain residual grudgingness in these passages ("I know that Lust has absolutely no share in my passion"); and two unrhymed sonnets show that, however distinguished as a writer of prose, Russell was a lamentable poet. Then come, in Part 3, Russell's "Apostolic Essays", clever, amusing, unprecious and, unlike many of the papers delivered to that self-admiring Society, unembarrassing. They include one late paper ("Seems, Madam, nay it is", 1897) foreshadowing the brisk break with neo-Hegelianism which came a little later. Parts 4 and 5 consist of the essays he wrote for his tutors during his year of study for Part II of the Moral Sciences Tripos, in which he gained a First Class with distinction in 1894. They are, simply, the essays of a student – though of a student of evidently first-class ability and unusual industry and self-confidence.

Considerably more interesting are the published reviews and papers on geometry which occupy Part 6. The two most substantial of them correspond to parts of his Fellowship dissertation and of his first philosophical book, *An Essay on the Foundations of Geometry* (1897). He distinguishes theses, or axioms, which he considers essential to any geometry, and hence *a priori*, from those which are specifically Euclidean; the latter he declares to be empirical, thus cutting loose from his Kantian starting-point. Later, he was convinced by "Einstein's revolution" that this position was completely wrong in its claims of a priority; but the papers are crisply and impressively argued, with a full and confident professionalism; and the book which incorporated them was well received – as, given the state of science at the time, it deserved to be.

The volume ends with a small number of loosely related papers on political, economic and moral themes. Before writing his Fellowship dissertation Russell was undecided whether philosophy or politics was to be his vocation; if the latter, he thought a knowledge of economics would be essential, and consequently, to the horror of his more discerning friends, briefly contemplated writing his dissertation in that subject. At the time, Russell called himself a Socialist; but his unashamed elitism and his witty and spirited defence of inequalities of wealth ("The Uses of Luxury") must have seemed outrageously reactionary to the more earnest adherents of that creed. His early, and proper, adolescent anxiety not to distress his "people" by revealing his scepticism was succeeded by an equally proper adult readiness to shock the conventional mind, whether of the progressive or the conservative variety.

One of the latest-written papers in the volume, though included in an early section. (Part 2), is a "Self-Appreciation" submitted by Russell in 1897 for publication in a short-lived periodical edited by Logan Pearsall Smith. It is pseudonymously signed; but style and content mark it as unmistakably his:

I am quite indifferent to the mass of human creatures; though I wish, as a purely intellectual problem, to discover some way in which they might all be happy. . . . I believe emotionally in Democracy, though I have no reason to do so. Progress I believe in both emotionally and scientifically, though not metaphysically. I am very patriotic. I believe in several definite measures (e.g. Infanticide) by which society could be improved.

I live most for myself – everything has for me a reference to my own education. . . . I feel myself superior to most people with only myself at times. . . . I believe in happiness and I am happy. I enjoy work immensely. I wish for fame among the expert few, but my chief desire . . . is a purely self-centred desire for intellectual satisfaction.

The book is admirably produced. The editorial task has been discharged with exemplary thoroughness and efficiency. The entire series of volumes, when completed, will be indispensable to a thorough study of the intellectual development of one whose influence on the philosophy of his and our time has perhaps been greater than that of any other single individual. In the meantime, we are provided, in this volume, with a full picture of the first steps in that development. As far as Russell's personal and emotional life is concerned, the book supplements, though it cannot replace, the early chapters of the *Autobiography* and of *My Life*. A complete edition of the correspondence is still to be desired.

Extensively expressive

Arthur C. Danto

SABINA LOVIBOND
Realism and Imagination in Ethics
238pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £15.
0631 139127

An advanced exercise in Wittgensteinian casuistics, Sabina Lovibond's defence of moral realism may usefully be set against certain contemporary *anti-realist* position in the philosophy of science, since the two, taken together, mark a singular reversal in recent philosophical attitude. Not too many years ago, science was reckoned the exemplary cognitive activity, representing the world as it really is or, if failing in this, then representing the world as it really isn't, but in any case true or false and so, by the prevailing criteria of the time, meaningful. Moral discourse, which seemed by surface grammatical observation to be stating or misstating facts, was really incapable of either, there being no moral reality to represent or misrepresent; so it at best served some function in human relationships – lobbying, persuading, expressing one's feelings – which it would be a largely sociolinguistic matter to determine. It is an irony of late philosophical history that just when scientific realism is declining into a twilight of semantical doubt, moral realism has begun to seem an attractive meta-ethical position. The irony is heightened into comedy through the fact that much the same considerations that we thought to throw scientific realism into doubt are being brought forward in support of moral realism. Miss Lovibond's general argument could serve to promote either view.

Both these fashionable positions must be credited to the later philosophy of Wittgenstein. On what he perceived as Wittgensteinian grounds, N. R. Hanson advanced a view so influential subsequently as to have become a dogma, that observations in science, as elsewhere, are so theory-laden that competing theories can find no neutral observational basis for cognitive arbitration; so subscribers to either virtually live in different and uncommunicating worlds. Similarly under the spell of Wittgenstein, Thomas Kuhn offered his famous theory of the history of science as a succession of incommensurable paradigms, replacing one another by revolutions of a kind many of his commentators have interpreted as nearly political. The victorious paradigm exercises a will-to-power over the scientific community, whose form of life – "normal science" as defined by the paradigm – endures until the next revolutionary overthrow.

The popularity of Kuhn's book must in part be explained by the extreme distrust of science on the part of a counter-culture impressed with the possibility of alternative forms of life, as though truth were no longer at issue. How additionally ironic that the corresponding position in moral theory should reinforce, according to Lovibond's account, a kind of *conservatism*. It is in any case her view that the "language game" – *ici on parle Wittgenstein* – in which our moral discourse consists goes hand-in-hand with a form of life we really live, and so penetrates the reality of the world, as it is taken up into this form of life, that there is as little room for separating fact and value as there is in Hansonian philosophy of science, for separating theory and observation. Hence the distinction, which earlier grounded the contrast between science and morals to the cognitive detriment of the latter, cannot really be framed within the language game we play.

This, if I have understood her, is what moral realism comes to: not the exciting claim that there are objective values, but only that fact and value cannot be cleanly sundered within the framework of our form of life as subtended by our language. "Our proposed Wittgensteinian realism", as she refers to it, does not require us to posit, indeed requires us *not* to posit, transcendent moral facts which moral discourse can succeed or fail in representing. As such, this would be the exact position of the non-cognitivist, against whom the author initially defines her position, which is finally congruent with that of her adversaries, with only this difference: their anti-realism rests on what she terms – a surprising pejorative in this day and age – "metaphysics". No: moral judgments

have "a non-metaphysical way of failing (sometimes) to be objective". This non-metaphysical way is to be found in the "physiognomic" (Lovibond uses quotation marks throughout with the same dislocative expertise as Henry James) of moral discourse, the non-cognitivist having "inflated to metaphysical proportions" these "physiognomic" differences between moral and scientific discourse. The reader must judge to what degree he would be persuaded by a defence of theological realism that consists in saying that "God exists" is true in the sense that "God" has a use in the language game we play. Once more the serious question is why this is to be called "realism."

"Science is the measure of all things", Wilfred Sellars once wrote in a witty paraphrase of Protagoras, not anticipating that the extreme relativism of Protagoras' famous *homo mensura* doctrine – each person projects his own world, so there are no false beliefs, one's beliefs defining one's world – would return to haunt the scientific realism with which Sellars meant to be identified. But anti-realism goes hand-in-hand with the view that each scientific community is Protagorean man writ large, each projecting its own world, and all worlds mutually incommensurable. Non-Wittgensteinian realism – or realism, to be brief – carries an implication that reality is independent of our representations and that commensurability awaits us at the end. And this is what realism in moral theory would ordinarily mean as well: objective, discourse-independent moral realities. Wittgensteinian realism entails relativism, and would do so even if we all played the same language game. Lovibond accepts with equanimity a form of relativism one would ordinarily regard as an argument against realism. Describing a curious way of treating monstrous births on the part of the Nuer, she writes: "to describe the case in this way is connected with a broader conception of what is morally or spiritually fitting; and this in turn would be fully intelligible only in the context of their total form of life. And the same thing is true of our moral perceptions."

To acquiesce in this relativism is, of course, to take a stand outside one's form of life, certainly a first step in raising a question of the moral adequacy of it. This in her scheme is the work of imagination, and one can tell from her clear moral sympathies that Lovibond chafes at the conservatism her view of moral realism imposes. From this perspective her book acquires a redeeming interest as a personal document. Nietzsche, of course, was a moral relativist who was also a critic of his own form of life, which is the complex posture Lovibond, to her credit, seeks to adopt. But Nietzsche would not have supposed he was defending a kind of realism, but attacking the propensity to posit, and then be enslaved by, transcendent realities. And this, too, is the spirit of Lovibond's argument: "an expressivism which extends to the whole of our discourse can clear itself, merely in virtue of its global character, of the irrationalist taint which it carried when it was asserted only in respect of a limited subject-matter."

There are two avenues for erasing the boundary between scientific and moral discourse. One is to take moral discourse much as Lovibond does, and then to try to show that scientific discourse is far more like it than we would initially have supposed. This gives us the global expressiveness of discourses to which she alludes, and makes science so immediately non-realist that it remains a puzzle why moral discourse by the same consideration is realist. The other way is to take scientific realism as true, and then to show that there are enough parallels between science and moral discourse for the latter to be addressed in the same philosophical terms as the former. Both ways involve casuistry, and neither of them is convincing. It is worth a sociological note that the morality-to-science strategy is more likely to be found among those in the United States who want to be moral realists, while the science-to-morality strategy is preferred in England, where there must be a number of parochial differences within those otherwise united in a Wittgensteinian consensus, to judge from the dense and complex polemics of this book. The controversy in any case is not likely to be settled soon, since one side accepts as virtues what the other regards as fatal objections.

Where the action is

John Sturrock

A. J. GREIMAS
Du Sens II
Mapp. Paris: Seuil. 90 fr.
2070065509
A. J. GREIMAS and J. COURTÈS
Semiotics and Language: An analytical dictionary
Translated by Larry Crist and others.
Mapp. Indiana University Press, distributed in
UK by International Book Distributors. £27.
0253351693

Nostudy is so puritanically bent on disenchantment as narratology, or the study of narrative, which must hold aloof from the siren charms of stories if it is to take them successfully to pieces, in search of their deep grammar. As if to enhance their own steely refusal to be enticed by what they read, and so robbed of their will to analyse, narratologists have tended to learn dissection on those simplest of narratives in which enchantment is an explicit theme: on folk and fairy-tales, which make ideal corpses because they are at once eventful, anonymous and unusually clearly articulated. The familiar narrative elements that the years have glued so blatantly together offer a nicely manageable repertoire for the narratologist to identify, unstitch, describe and compare.

But in the sixty or so years it has been going, since it was initiated in Russia by Vladimir Propp, narratology has moved out and upward from the nursery, to engage with more artful, subtle and inward sorts of story, in which the actors and actions are a great deal harder to catch. No one has done more to urge this marginal discipline – which is neither quite literary, nor philosophical, nor linguistic – towards maturity than A. J. Greimas, a poetist of great rigour and notable ambition. (He is A. J. Greimas on the front and back covers of this new book, but Algirdas Julien Greimas on the spine and the title-page; which is either the publishers slipping up or else the semiotician-

author playfully turning himself into a minor but original semiotic crux.) *Du Sens II* is a collection of papers which have appeared in specialist journals over the thirteen years since an earlier collection by Greimas, *Du Sens*. They show narratology in a positive and resourceful light. Greimas is impressively thorough in abstraction, and in the laying down of new classes of significant oppositions, in those essays here which continue the exacting work of discrimination between the various, yet easily muddled constituents of narrative. But unlike those of his more mechanically-minded followers for whom accurate description is an end in itself, he also moves adventurously out from the safety of his grammar to see if he can integrate his findings at this implicit, logical level with those to be won from raising his sights to the other level, not of narrative but narratives – the real thing, that is, in all their psychological and social density. Greimas's work is a heartening proof that not all narratologists are content to shut themselves away with the purely (if they are pure) algebraic properties of narrative; he shoulder the responsibilities of the true semiotician, who should want to know the values of the cultural conventions which he has taken as his subject. Greimas has a strong sense of the collective, of the ambient "discourse social" with which individuals can but enter into an exchange of values and meanings; it extends, in Greimas's own case, to regular assertions of the modesty of his researches, which he offers as much as anything as an index to the work to come, from others.

One of the best things that Greimas has done is partly to stabilize the terminology to which narratologists resort – it has been a besetting sin of French poetics forever to multiply its terms, as if each new student of narrative owed it to himself to deploy his own battery of arcane. Greimas has installed, and most usefully, the crucial pairing of *actant* and *actor*, to serve instead of the hopelessly loose term *character* (or Propp's now decidedly archaic *dramatis persona*) and, in so doing, to separate the two

levels at which narratology works, the formal and the discursive. The *actant* belongs to grammar and is the basic, indeterminate party to an act, reducible without remainder to the grammarian's symbolic notation. The *actor* on the other hand lives on the surface, in an actual narrative, at the cardinal point where syntax and semantics meet. *Actants* are actors and actors *actants* but there is no one-to-one relation between them, since a single *actant* may split into several actors or a single actor subsume several *actants*. To keep the two levels from merging in the mind is a feat, but if one wants to share the insights and pleasure of Greimas's narratology it is vital to do so. Help, of a kind, may be got from the English version of his and J. Courtès's *Semiotics and Language: An analytical dictionary*, in which such terms as *actant* and *actor* are lengthily defined; but this is no book for beginners, being very much oriented towards Greimas's own work and translated into an English compliant to the point of idolatry with the original: eg. Greimas's *énoncé d'état*, which is one kind of primary narrative statement, and opposed to an *énoncé de faire*, comes out as *utterance of state*, as opposed to an *utterance of doing*, when "static" and "active" utterances, if we have to have the phonocentric term utterances, and not statements, would better have fitted the bill.

Greimas has hopes reminiscent of those once held out by Chomsky – and understandably so, given that he too is a transformationalist tracking down a secret *ur-grammar* – that by giving such close and intelligent attention to the structures which inform all narrative, we shall eventually be able, as he puts it, to "rendre compte de l'organisation de l'imaginaire humain, projection tout aussi bien d'univers collectifs qu'individuels". But what does "rendre compte" there really portend: a description or an explanation? And does Greimas fancy that he will one day draw up a small set of

axioms which demonstrably subvert the entire multimodal product of the human imagination, as if that product were narrative or nothing? [His unexpected aside, which he passes in an otherwise empirical essay, is evidence at least that the structuralist dream lives on, of generating by rules the infinitely and variously many from the prototypical one.]

Greimas's optimism means that his readers may be keener to get on to those later chapters of his book where he has a chance to give an earnest of his pan-narratological powers. In the scarcely more than a hundred pages he allows himself, he does rather well, giving us consistent, ample semiotic readings of a Maupassant story; the autobiographical preface to a work of scholarship by the Indo-Europeanist Georges Dumézil; the *défi*, or formal provocation of one person by another; the passion of anger; and a recipe for *soupe au pistou*. These are all potentially confusing structures, resistant to capture by the hasty or casual grammarian, but Greimas masters them with his usual care and in each case opens the way promisingly for the transition to be made from the formal to the cultural aspects.

Many will find these later, less mathematical exercises more congenial reading than the much tougher grammatical chapters of the book. But more congenial does not mean very congenial: *Du Sens II* is neither quick nor graceful reading and when Greimas starts writing about the values attributable to the ingredients and the making of a *soupe au pistou* one pines for the wild and wonderful touch of Roland Barthes, who would have let the grammar of the recipe go hang but found a rich mythology in the petit bourgeois brew itself. But Greimas, in his patient, uncompromising way, is concerned that the foundations of narratology should be seen to be sound, especially when it takes such risks as poking its nose into the kitchen.

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Deconstructive thinking

Michael Sprinker

MARK KRUPNICK (Editor)
Deconstruction: Derrida and After
Mapp. Indiana University Press, distributed in
the UK by International Book Distributors.
£2.75.
0253318033

Part of the growing body of commentary on Jacques Derrida in English, these essays exemplify the new sophistication toward deconstruction in Britain and the United States. At the same time, they testify to the difficulty of getting hold of Derrida while maintaining some distance from the manner of his philosophizing (with the one exception of Paul de Man's contribution, "Hegel on the Sublime").

The seductive power of Derrida's rhetoric is evident in the essays by Herman Rapaport and Chaitany Spivak. The former weaves themes from psychoanalysis, Shelley and Derrida into a theoretical meditation on the necessity for "writing" and fantasy to be "staged" or "named" that is to possess determinate boundaries as the condition of their production. Spivak examines the staging of woman in deconstructive writing and finds in it a masculinizing (with the one exception of Paul de Man's contribution, "Hegel on the Sublime").

Gregory Ulmer assimilates the Derridan theory to Op Art, mathematical catastrophe theory and relativistic mechanics, though to the extent that deconstruction raises suspicions about all such analogical reasoning, one might question the appropriateness of Ulmer's model to his object. Similar doubts arise from reading Spivak's Handelman's effort to specify attitudes between Derrida's writing and rabbinical tradition. Of all the commentators on Derrida in this volume, that by Tom Conley on the subject of style is the most consistently

attuned to the inflections of Derrida's own rhetoric, which he raises to the central philosophical problem in the corpus. At least since *Glas* the intricacy of Derrida's texts offers ample support for this claim.

Of the two essays not specifically about Derrida, Michael Ryan's "Deconstruction and Social Theory" is the more accessible, though also less Derridan. Hypostatizing liberalism as a virtually metaphysical concept, Ryan makes the very move that deconstruction seems set on disallowing: stabilizing the meaning of a concept outside its rhetorical functioning in a particular text. This is a persistent temptation in deconstruction, as the operative terms in Derrida take on a life of their own, beyond the precise context of his texts. No one is more alive to the difficulty of fending off metaphysical ways of thinking than Derrida, and his example should caution us against appropriating the term "deconstruction" too quickly.

Paul de Man's essay presents a powerful commentary on the place and function of the sublime in Hegel, at the same time developing general propositions about the nature of politics by tracking the emergence of the political moment in Hegel's system. De Man is persuasive in arguing for the implication of the political with Hegel's epistemology and aesthetics, but makes a false move, in my view, when he equates political effectiveness with critical and conceptual rigour (citing Marx as a paradigm case). This is not to say that there is no relationship between theoretical speculation and political power, merely to question whether the latter follows necessarily and directly from the former. Trotsky may have been the greater theoretician, but it was Stalin who seized control of the state apparatus and bent Marxist theory to serve an effective, if brutal, political end.

The tide of deconstruction seems unlikely to ebb in the near future, and one index of its power is the capacity of Derrida's texts to elicit the level of commentary evident in the present volume. But the subtitle is misleading: there is, as yet, nothing on the horizon of literary criticism that is authentically "after Derrida".

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The canon and his fossils

J. B. Morrell

NICOLAAS A. RUPKE
The Great Chain of History:
William Buckland and the English School of
Geology (1814-1849)
322p. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £22.50.
0198229070

William Buckland was renowned as a flamboyant teacher of geology at the University of Oxford from 1814 to 1849. Canon of Christ Church from 1825 and Dean of Westminster from 1845, he took his religion as seriously as his geology; but he presented himself, even to fellow geologists, as a learned clown. He revelled in eccentricity, devising a special carriage to carry heavy fossils and lecturing in cave and field while wearing full formal dress.

Buckland was a geological wag. At the end of a lecture in Scotland on the fossilized footprints of animals, including the cheirotherium, a member of the audience wondered why they were represented in Buckland's diagrams as walking in one direction. Buckland immediately retorted that cheirotherium was a Scotsman and he always went south. Once, lost on horseback at night on his way to London, he picked up a handful of earth, smelt it, and promptly exclaimed "Uxbridge". His clowning attracted caricature. He was dubbed "Ammon knight" after galloping off with a huge ammonite fossil over his shoulders, his head passing through its middle; and *Punch* depicted him as Professor Buckwheat in recognition of his interest in agriculture. What does one make of an Oxford don who leapt around in his lectures to show how the pterodactyl flew, and of a Tory President of the British Association for the Advancement of Science who displayed a handkerchief bearing a large portrait of Queen Adelaide and then ostentatiously blew his nose with it? Even those close to Buckland were puzzled by his strange mixture of the humorous and the serious. No wonder that this enigmatic

man has not attracted a book-length study since Mrs Gordon's final tribute of 1894.

Given the recent emphasis by historians of geology on Lyell and the young Darwin, it is refreshing to have a book, clearly written and using a wide range of sources, which looks at Buckland's work. Developing the insights given in the last fifteen years by Rudwick, Davies and Cannon, Nicolaas Rupke shows clearly why Buckland was for some twenty-five years such a central figure in English geology. There are many good things in Rupke's analysis. He brings out well the paradox that Buckland's contribution to the diluvial geology of the 1820s was undermined by his own spectacular research on cave palaeontology, especially hyena dens. He stresses that at Oxford Buckland cleverly developed diluvial geology as a branch of history, of natural theology, and as a subordinate part of a liberal classical education. He reveals how by the mid-1830s Buckland modified his diluvial theory: he still believed that cataclysmic events had occurred in the past, but he no longer saw the Noachian flood as the last of these. Rupke sees that Buckland's early conversion to Agassiz's glaciation theory grew out of his long-standing interest in diluvial phenomena, and thereby enabled him to maintain, albeit modified, his former diluvianism. There are excellent discussions of Buckland's creation of a European stratigraphical column and of his palaeo-ecological approach, as shown in his research on coprolites, on fossilized footprints, and on fossilized upright trees. Rupke is right to stress that Buckland's account of the megatherium, an "egregious apparent monstrosity", was the pinnacle of his natural theology, with its emphasis on perfect adaptation.

But in his welcome enthusiasm to rescue Buckland from the charge of being nothing more than a popular geological buffoon, Rupke makes exaggerated claims for his Oxford hero. He sweeps away both Charles Lyell and William Smith from the geological pan-

theon. For example, in the 1830s Buckland believed in the progressivist synthesis, of which a key element was the tenet that over geological time there had been a development of animals and plants from simple to complex forms. The main objection to this view came from Lyell, a former pupil of Buckland, who is dismissed by Rupke as obscurantist and intellectually weak; yet Lyell's opposition was based on the first extensive analysis in English of the conditions of fossilization and the differential preservation of fossils. Rupke also denigrates the influence of Smith, who in the early 1830s was styled the father of English geology for being the first to identify strata and to determine their succession by means of their fossil content.

Given his many virtues, it is a pity that Rupke makes some intemperate claims about the historiography of geology, such as that it is universally held that in the 1880s English geology, epitomized by Buckland, was basically catastrophic in its explanations. This position, first adumbrated by Whewell in the late 1830s, received its *coup de grâce* years ago in the entry on Buckland in the *Dictionary of Scientific Biography* by Cannon, who stressed Buckland's use of observable contemporary analogies. Rupke also accuses Owen Chadwick of intellectual indolence in allegedly simplifying the complex relations between geology and Genesis to just geology versus Genesis. In fact Chadwick was quite aware that Buckland's liberal Anglican position was opposed for different reasons by both Oxonian Tractarians and fundamentalists; and he gave an incisive analysis of the views of Baden Powell, one of Buckland's fellow Oxford science professors, who thought it futile to try to reconcile geology and Genesis as Buckland had tried to do.

Although Rupke states that there was no single father of English geology, he all but confers that title on Buckland, seeing him as a key figure in the Oxford school of geology in the 1820s and in what he calls the English

school of geology in the 1830s. Though the notion of an Oxford school makes sense, that of the English one has its problems. It fails to account for the acrimonious controversy about stratigraphical systems such as the Devonian; and it fails to recognize that the vitality of English geology lay not in homogeneity but in intellectual diversity and debates between groups of varied composition which did not harden into permanent factions. As issues changed, so did alliances. Thus Buckland and Lyell were opposed on progressive fossil development and on the Devonian system; but they were allies in supporting Agassiz's glaciation theory.

Rupke concludes that the English school lost its leader and began to disintegrate in the early 1840s when Buckland began to fade as a research geologist. Yet this decade witnessed the rapid growth of the Geological Survey, the triumphant extension of the Silurian nomenclature to Russia, and presidential addresses to the ever-living Geological Society of London which often ran to seventy printed pages in order to cover the previous year's plethora of work. Crucially, the notion of the English school does not sufficiently differentiate Buckland and Sedgwick, his geological counterpart at Cambridge. In the 1830s Sedgwick had serious doubts about Buckland's utilitarianism and his Bridgewater Treatise. By the late 1840s Buckland was withdrawing from research, had seen his Oxford geology class dwindle, and was so downhearted about the prospects of science at Oxford that he refused to join Acland in agitating for a university natural history museum. At Cambridge, however, Sedgwick was still hard at research, maintained the popularity of his geological lectures, and obtained a new geological museum where he trained six gifter assistants as Ansted, Salter and McCoy. This telling contrast suggests that the notion of the English school of geology is procrustean and cannot account for what Murchison in 1842 called "the benefits of free trade in geology".

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Eternal schoolboy

Norman Stone

HUGH BROGAN
The Life of Arthur Ransome
456pp. Cape. £10.95.
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ARTHUR RANSOME
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Illustrated by Fred Taylor
267pp. Oxford University Press. £3.50.
0192814125
Old Peter's Russian Tales
243pp. Cape. £6.95.
0224028592

We walked out of this village of Storsby together with three mottled cows, driven by a woman with a handkerchief on her head of red, orange and white, a deep red, green skirt and a bodice of bright purple, flaring like a tulip. As we walked we were joined by other women and other cows, until at last there was a considerable herd, driven by four women with long skirts over an open space of moorland, green grass and swamp, with grey rocks showing through the turf. Fields on either side were enclosed with stone walls built without mortar, like our walls in Lancashire and Westmorland, but lower, because the stones are round, sea-worn boulders and harder to fit together than the flat slates at home.

Thus Arthur Ransome on a Scandinavian journey, in a book of nautical description which sold very well indeed. Hugh Brogan, Ransome's biographer, thinks that this passage "is like a painting by a member of the Barbizon school".

It is also a fairly representative sample of the mature style of Ransome: he hit upon it in his later thirties and early forties (he was born in 1884) and used it to profitable effect in *Racundra*, a famous nautical work, in *Peter Duck* and *Swallows and Amazons*. These books gave him fame and fortune: during the Second World War he obtained much-sought-after rented premises because the agents knew him, from their children, as a household word.

Brogan thinks that the children's books work because they are "full of symbolic meaning". The plot of *Swallows and Amazons*, he tells us, "recapitulates several of the most important dramas in its author's life, and beautifully resolves them. Children do not bother their heads with such considerations. They find instead that someone is playing a fascinating game in the book's pages." Brogan wonders if the strange power of these books did not come from Ransome's own essential childishness of nature.

In many ways, Ransome was the typical *puer aeternus*: likeable, wayward, a bit of a show-off, rather weak-willed. His father, a Professor of History at Leeds, died when he was a small boy, and he was brought up by his tough-sounding mother. She prevented him from going to Oxford, insisting, instead, that he should read Natural Sciences at York College. But that bored him, for he wanted to write, so he established himself in London and, in 1907, produced his first "real" book, *Bohemia In London*. Thereafter, he boiled pots, making some headlines with a libel case brought against him by Lord Alfred Douglas for paraphrasing the verdict of *De Profundis*. These books may have their readers, even now, though they strike me as suffocatingly mannered, and rather naïve: how can you write a book about Bohemia without discussing sex somewhere along the line?

In that respect Ransome, like vast numbers of young men of middle-class origins in Edwardian England, was extremely undeveloped: according to Brogan, he was a complete innocent until the age of twenty-four, which would have been unthinkable on the Continent, and would have been thought laughable in Bloomsbury. In his mid-twenties, he was more or less caught by a designing woman rather older than himself, who was scared of being left on the shelf. The marriage was a disaster. She was flighty, lazy, pretentious, none too bright, and, as things turned out, crazily vengeful. As Ransome wrote to his mother, there were "tremendous, absurd tantrums." "Three days before I left, in one of her terrific scenes (in this case because of a mistake I made in the name of a servant, a mistake I instantly admitted) she took up the two lit lamps from the dinner table and beat them to pieces." In the end, she tried to destroy Ransome as a writer by hanging on to his large library as part of the divorce

settlement, and she successfully destroyed relations between him and their daughter.

In 1913, and it is the first moment when you warm to Ransome, he just went away: he told his wife he was going to London, and in fact took the high road to St Petersburg. Identification with foreign countries seems to be, for many Englishmen, a form of release. Reading Brogan's splendid account of Ransome's Russian period (which went on until long past the Revolution) I wondered if there is not a good book to be written about the English (and Scottish) Russophiles: a rich, confused, powerful lot. Why is it that, of all the continental litera-



tures, it is Russian that comes across most strongly in English? In Ransome's case, Russia acted as a literary catalyst, in that he turned to the world of literature, and children's stories (*Old Peter*). It also gave him a historical role, for he lived in St Petersburg as a journalist, and so witnessed the Revolution. The accuracy of

Making it

Stephen Koss

DAVID SINCLAIR
Dynasty: The Astors and their times
426pp. Dent. £11.95.
0460 044095

David Sinclair, a journalist by profession and a moralizer by inclination, has invented something called "Astordom" and he has attacked with relish its cupidity, its privileges, its self-indulgence, and even the potency of its myths. The result is an unremitting diatribe, disguised as a family biography and never more cruel than when it purports to offer sympathy. Some of the indictments ring true, others merely hollow. For, as derivative in its research as in its title, *Dynasty* covers too much ground — chronologically, thematically and territorially — in too superficial a manner.

Family histories, authorized or otherwise, are notoriously difficult to construct. As generations change, so too do moral climates, social contexts, and political structures. Sinclair, seemingly oblivious of these factors, tends to posit a constancy of character not only on the part of the Astors (including those who married into the family), but also within Anglo-American society, at least at its higher altitudes. Preoccupied with successive marital entanglements and juicier disentanglements, wills and the legal battles over them, scandals and corruption, he fails to delineate shifting backgrounds.

Spanning 220 years, the narrative begins in 1763 with the birth of John Jacob Astor, who arrived in New York via London in 1784. "To him the United States was not a country, but a commodity to be bought and sold", and he died in 1848 as "the richest man in America" thanks to the profits he had amassed in the fur trade ("floated... on a sea of liquor"), the China trade, and especially tobacco rents. "The anecdotes of his meanness are legion", writes Sinclair, who does not hesitate to quote the most unflattering of them.

Ransome's reporting, and the prediction of the course of Bolshevism, showed a clear-sightedness that was not shared by many people in the West. Quite soon, he gave up hope for any of the moderate Russian parties, and was very impressed by the Bolsheviks — the only Russians who showed energy and efficiency, and who knew what they wanted. Like Bruce Lockhart, the British government's chief diplomatic agent, he argued forcefully against intervention, and made himself unpopular in London. Again, like Bruce Lockhart, he was brought personal liberation by "the Russian turmoil", for he took up with a Russian lady and so disposed of a marriage that had been wrong from the start. The Bolsheviks always liked him, and Radek, especially, was fascinated by him. On first setting off for Russia, Ransome had a travelling chest sent on ahead via the Party. It was opened by Radek, who, discovering books on chess, fishing, navigation and folklore, at once "sent for a journalist with such an unlikely mix of interests". Ransome, for his part, said that the Bolsheviks "are not human figures... They are a pig-headed, narrow-minded set of energetic lunatics, like as if they were possessed by seven devils apiece, and each one of them capable of getting through the amount of work that would be done by twenty ordinary Russians".

After his Russian experiences, Ransome had to settle down for a time in the Baltic port of Tallinn (Brogan calls it, throughout, "Reval": surely an anachronism) to await divorce. His new wife suited him well: she was practical, down-to-earth and a bit of a bully, but she kept him working at what he was good at — books on navigation and children's stories — and the pair of them lived happily ever after: the last part of Ransome's life makes rather uneventful reading. Apart from *Old Peter*, his books are not my cup of tea, but even for those of us who respond lukewarmly to them, Brogan's life of the man and his study of the works serve as a powerful, excellently supported and splendidly-written piece of English cultural history.

William Waldorf, reversing his great-grandfather's route, quit America ("not a fit place for a gentleman to live") and settled in England. While it is doubtful that he joined the Carlton Club on the initiative of the Prince of Wales, he secured a measure of political influence by means of his newspaper holdings (which Sinclair has not quite sorted out), and eventually collected his long-coveted peerage. His eldest son, Waldorf, was elected MP for Plymouth after marrying "the outrageous Nancy", who obligingly took over her husband's seat in the Commons when his father's title descended upon him. A good deal remains to be said about Waldorf, both as a Tory progressive and as a press magnate. Sinclair, however, has preferred to focus upon Nancy. Though not an Astor by birth, she is more relevant to the story than Bobbie Shaw, her son from a previous marriage, whose homosexual misdemeanors are recounted gratuitously.

Nancy Astor's parliamentary achievements were hardly as "negligible" as the author maintains, and neither she nor her brother-in-law, John Jacob V, was as instrumental in promoting doctrines of appeasement as we are invited to believe. To be fair, Sinclair stops short of echoing the allegation that the members of the Cliveden Set were running the pre-war Foreign Office on Hitler's behalf. Yet, he insists, this "was a time when Britain buried its head in the sand, and *The Times*, its owner [John Jacob V] and his brother and sister-in-law helped to dig the hole". How different it all would have been, one may suppose, if only Winston had been nicer to Nancy!

Last, and distinctly least, there is an awkwardly assembled group portrait of another Cliveden Set, which gathered in 1961 for a "sex-and-spies drama". "Bill" Astor, the third Viscount, was "completely absolved" of involvement in the Profumo affair, though Mandy Rice-Davies reportedly offered to collaborate with him on a book. Had he accepted, which would have been unthinkable, the product would surely have been less gossipy, error-ridden, and sneeringly censorious than Sinclair's collage of caricatures.

Sentimental schoolmaster

Tony Rothern

WILFRID BLUNT
Married to a Single Life
306pp. Salisbury: Michael Russell. £9.95.
085955 1008

Wilfrid Blunt has earlier written the classic work on botanical illustration, travel books and "lives" of, among others, Linnaeus, Ludwig II of Bavaria, "Mulai Jamail", Emperor of Morocco, and Sir Sydney Cockerell, the Fitzwilliam Museum Director. He has now added to these a confessional autobiography which, although it is primarily a catalogue of people, events and anecdotes, is also light, brisk and in the main funny.

"I say, Bishop, are you a bugger too?" We are with Wilfrid Blunt and his brothers, Anthony and Christopher, as children in the garden of their father's rectory in Bournemouth. There is a fad for collecting butterflies, or bugs. One of the brothers waits for tea-time to ask the visiting Bishop of Winchester if he shares the enthusiasm. Introduced as "one — dare I say — queer incident", this is Blunt being frank about his childhood. School days at Marlborough provide full instruction in the practice of "basking", "bum-shaving" and "hot-potting". Blunt finds himself allergic to wool and to games; England is at war and it is cold. There is a wholly tender evocation of the character of a fellow-pupil and later fellow-undergraduate, Richard Goodall, a note missed in the account of Blunt's painful love for a pupil of his own at Haileybury, Stephen Haggard. There is a beguiling description of the totally incompetent art-master, Napper Lloyd, whose classroom contained creaky desks "rejected by more serious subjects", and who dealt out "ludicrously gentle blows" with a cane to restore order.

The "incurably romantic" and "deplorably sentimental" Blunt found solace at Haileybury, where he went as art-master in 1923. But before he could drape his room with exotic rugs, welcome those seeking refuge and dispense to them Post-Impressionism and cake, there were battles to be won. An art-master was seen by the school as an unwarranted luxury; he was made to teach French, maths and divinity. Boxes of hard little water-colour paints had to be replaced with materials affording a certain freedom of expression. It had to be established that the teaching of art necessitates availability of images of the undraped nude, and that the history of painting crosses the 1900 boundary. All these changes were opposed. How difficult it must have been, though Blunt implies little criticism — to do so would be contrary to the nature of his confession. His introduction of pottery at Haileybury was immediately under suspicion. It was thought that the sensuous feel of clay turning on a wheel would incite boys to masturbation.

It is, of course, compulsory for public-school masters to be eccentric. Blunt makes neat work of the "academic flotsam and jetsam" with which he was washed up. All strive to catch the eye of the headmaster. The most coveted prize is a housemastership. With this, and its associated grandeur, in mind, less fortunate quirks of personality are concealed and strong involvement with extra-curricular activity exploited. There is slander and back-scratching. The most unlikely figures are seen in games kit: the possibility of a House is never more than twelve years away. The difference between the jealous and the apathetic is that between the would-be housemaster and the bird of passage. Blunt saw himself as a bird of passage but stayed at Haileybury for fifteen years.

His account of himself, and his constantly changing enthusiasms, needs to be decorated if it is to sparkle. The author, as the dust-jacket summarizes it, "studies singing in Munich and Florence, lends an India rubber to Pavlova and a light to Adolf Hitler, and helps Lord Alfred Douglas to judge a baby show". He was also a classmate of Beverley Nichols, was painted as a child by the Pre-Raphaelite follower, Byam Shaw, and showed his own paintings to Queen Mary. What raise this frank autobiography to entertainment of a very high order are the deftness of the portraits, the sympathetic eye for the ridiculous, and the stylistic elegance.

Teaching the top people

David Pryce-Jones

ARTHUR HEARNDEN
Red Robert: A Life of Robert Birley
273pp. Hamish Hamilton. £9.95.
0241 111587

Robert Birley, to judge from this account, did not encounter the obstacles in life that the general run of human beings seem to experience. He had wanted to teach, and he did so supremely well, rising to the top of his profession. For him there were apparently no unfulfilled ambitions, nothing to be ashamed of, no wayward passions or moral dilemmas, no discernible set-backs. At every stage in a stately triumph he was awarded an alpha. In tones of wonder and admiration his biographer depicts a man occupying a most untroubled niche among the great and the good.

Born in 1903 in India, Birley was the son of a successful member of the Indian Civil Service. In the background were family businesses, Deputy Lieutenants of the County, a Liberal MP and an Honorary Canon of Manchester Cathedral, and what Arthur Hearnden calls a "burgeoning progressive tradition". Grannie, to whom the boy was sent home from India when he had to be educated, "found a precocious pupil with whom she could discuss political and religious questions as though he were an adult".

Many pages are devoted to the masters at Rugby when Birley went there in 1917 - truly, school lore dies hard. All were apparently remarkable and sound, as well as keen games-players, and capable of writing a report on Birley such as: "First out of 25; bad, but the others were worse". "The unforgettable summer term of unbridled reading in the Rugby Lower Bench" led Birley naturally to the playing fields where "He took to rugby with a will and in due time his lanky figure made its appearance in the succession of photographs that lined the gloomy corridors of the house".

So to the Brackenbury Scholarship at Balliol, where Birley, from a little hockey and some folk dancing... Birley's own pleasures were predominantly intellectual. Along with Balliol contemporaries also destined for the phalanx of the great and the good, such as Denis Brogan, Henry Brooke, Roger Mynors, Walter Oakeshott and John Hicks, he variously debated, acted, bicycled, visited medieval churches, read papers, won prizes and got his first.

In the horizons described by Mr Hearnden, there are always masters and pupils, the former beneficially influencing the latter until they become masters themselves. Nobody seems to come to things like Christianity, a social conscience, even bibliography, unless under the inspiration of the likes of A. D. Lindsay, Master of Balliol, or M. R. James and Dr Allington, Provost and Headmaster of Eton, at which school Birley was offered and took his first job, as an assistant history master. His course was fixed, all the more so because he turned down that another offer to be an Oxford don. At the unprecedented age of thirty, he almost became Headmaster of Eton, but was appointed instead Headmaster of Charterhouse. His achievement there, we are told, was to put the

school in touch with modern life, acquiring property, setting up trust funds and abolishing the bowler hat along with compulsory attendance in chapel.

Once in his career Birley broke out of schoolmastering, from April 1947 until the summer of 1948, when he was Educational Advisor to Sir Brian Robertson, the Deputy Military Governor in the British-occupied zone of Germany. Educational institutions there had to be inspected, and anti-Nazi Germans sought out and cultivated. Reviving intellectual life in practice meant such contrivances as bringing over a Harold Nicolson or a Herbert Read to lecture. Denazification was so overwhelming a task that the Western Powers, in the end took the line of least resistance. Once the war-criminal trials were over, the Germans were encouraged to get on with their own business. A characteristic anecdote reveals Birley telling a member of his staff, "I think the Educational Branch could profit from some really bad administration". In the circumstances, and especially in education, perhaps that was the best that democracy could do.

Eton was his natural habitat, and as its headmaster in due course, from 1948 to 1963, Birley came into his own. Tall, rather uncoordinated in his movements, definitely magisterial, he looked the part to perfection. Plain living and high thinking came spontaneously. He took it

for granted that the boys had his own capabilities and disposition for learning. His language was grandiloquent, and he was not condescending to the young. One of his very first talks as the new Eton headmaster consisted of sex instruction to the new boys, of whom I happened to be one. Nothing that he said was intelligible, but in spite of that, perhaps because of it, the occasion was the first of many to impose themselves. I see him now arriving for early school at half-past seven in the morning, red-eyed and unshaven, straight from a night in the College Library, to brandish a bibliographical discovery, to introduce the plays of Stephen Phillips (of all dim authors), to discuss how and why trade unions had acquired legal immunities (a favourite topic), to speak of St Nepomuk and his statue on the St Charles Bridge in Prague or of the terrible deforestation by the Communists of Jan Masaryk, whom he had known.

According to Hearnden, a portrait of Brahms had hung in Birley's office in Berlin, where it was mistaken by some ignoramus for Marx. The legend of "Red Robert" was the result, and marvellously misplaced it was too. Far from being a radical reformer, Birley was an instinctive believer in anything old and tried, his conservatism relieved by his curiosity. Eton, when he arrived, had been a somewhat run-down late-Victorian institution, and he left it upgraded, though with an overall

moral emphasis retained. Various results of that emphasis are widely encountered today, in clergymen bent on reform, or Marxist and Trotskyite dissidents - classic Etonian types who owe more to Birley and the school's tradition than they may recognize.

In 1964 Birley accepted the job of Professor of Education at the University of Wiltshire. It was thoroughly in keeping that he chose to set an example as an independent spirit in such a place at such a time. Eventually retiring, he settled as a professor in London, at the City University.

A writer of rather trite prose, Hearnden has difficulties presenting and even documenting so well-ordered and regular a career. Here is a marmoreal epitaph in a calm cloister rather than a biography. Hearnden takes it all on trust. Perhaps he is right to do so. Birley was endearing, innocent at heart, and never more so than in his optimism. To him, man is not only rational but also needs must love the highest when he sees it. All the same, if Birley had exceptional strength of character, why was he content to exercise it almost exclusively on schoolboys? Was this a response to challenge, or an evasion of it? Did not his publications and addresses - indeed his intellectual enthusiasm at large - turn into antiquarianism and quirk? But he taught his pupils to ask doubting questions, and that is perhaps his great and most lasting claim on them.

Loosening Auntie's stays

D. A. N. Jones

MICHAEL TRACEY
A Variety of Lives: A Biography of Sir Hugh Greene
345pp. Bodley Head. £15.
0370 300262

One of the tasks of administrators is to make large, symbolic gestures, as if they were royalty: their juniors, the executives, then do things according to the spirit and style of the gesture. In the British broadcasting establishment the knights who make the quasi-royal gestures are generally clever soldiers, liberal headmasters or serious journalists, men like Sir Ian Jacob, Sir Brian Young or Sir William Haley. The reign of Sir Hugh Greene over the BBC (and his regency over the broadcasting services of post-Hitler Germany and post-Papadopoulos Greece) might suggest that this Director-General possesses the valuable characteristics of all three administrative types.

Greene is perhaps most famous in Britain for playing the "permissive" role in the sacred drama, or pantomime, of the 1960s co-starring Mary Whitehouse with her "Clean Up TV" campaign: she was and remains hostile to expressions of sensuality, dissidence and irreverence in certain programmes which Sir Hugh favoured or tolerated. There was the cabaret, *That Was The Week That Was*, the comedy, *Till Death Us Do Part* (parodying working-class conservatism), and the drama series, *The Wednesday Play*, bringing to the domestic screen aspects of life in the 1960s which had previously been left to novelists and theatres.

The relevant section of Michael Tracey's biography has lost two of its original pages (231-2), and a substitute has been grafted into the book. This is the result of legal action taken by Mrs Whitehouse's behalf, after newspaper serialisation of the book. The substitute page is still interesting: it now includes a list of the severe remarks Mrs Whitehouse has made about Sir Hugh - with a comment from the *Sunday Telegraph* suggesting "that she had defamed Hugh Greene and that the only explanation of his failure to take action against her might be Christian charity". Mrs Whitehouse (it is alleged here) claimed that Greene was encouraging the BBC to be used for purposes "quite subversive of our whole way of life" and that he was "the one man who more than anybody else had been responsible for the moral collapse in this country". Tracey summarizes the symbolic conflict as being between a man who wished to "modernise a national cultural institution" and a woman who wished to "preserve old-fashioned Christian values". According to Tracey, Sir Hugh was not

clined to "issue fighting orders" or "influence programmes in depth"; but he did like to "nudge things along through indirect asides" - the quasi-royal gesture. Two programmes for which he could claim personal responsibility were *Songs of Praise* (devised after a discussion with Megan Lloyd George) and the comfortable American detective series, *Perry Mason* (recommended to Greene by Ian Fleming). As Tracey remarks, these innovations "hardly reflect the image of a gun-ho Director-General laying waste to traditional values". The new, legally acceptable pp 231-2 also maintain that Greene took against Mrs Whitehouse's "Clean Up TV" campaign, partly because Moral Re-armament propaganda was being distributed at the inaugural meeting. "That did it, as far as he was concerned", writes Tracey. "In the inter-war years, the evangelical Oxford Group, which became MRA in 1938, was thought by many people to have extreme right wing and possibly neo-fascist tendencies."

In what we call "fascism" (as in the military coups of the Third World, or of Greece in the 1960s) there is often an element of punitive puritanism. Greene, as a serious journalist in pre-war Germany, was practised in exposing and combating this tendency: he used the *Daily Telegraph* as his medium - since that paper, despite its narrow, nationalist tradition, had always looked kindly upon Jews and was more ready than *The Times* to challenge the Nazis. Greene liked Germany, says Tracey, partly because of "the sensuality and dissidence which bordered German culture like rich satin embroidered round the edge of a calico skirt". Greene's "interest in the dangerous edge of things" was not shared by the Nazis - nor by much more agreeable and worthy people, like Mrs Whitehouse and the respectable supporters of Moral Re-armament. It was only natural that they should want to get sensual and dissident cabarets off the domestic screen in the 1960s, and only natural that an anti-fascist like Greene should see their campaign as the toe of the 1930s jackboot.

During Hugh Greene's career (Tracey tells us), his "basic values" have often been suspiciously discussed by his fellow administrators. In 1966, the Chairman of the Governors, Lord Normanbrook, is said to have told Charles Curran, the Secretary of the BBC, that he wanted Greene to retire "with dignity" from the Director-Generalship, partly because of his "excessive attachment to libertarianism". Greene does not believe this story, since he thinks that this Chairman was too correct to discuss the Director-General with the Secretary - it would have been a breach of Normanbrook's code of etiquette.

However, that may be, certain administrators have needed to be persuaded that Greene

was not a pre-war Communist (but nearer to the centre of the Labour Party) and not a Roman Catholic (but, as he put it when challenged, a "respectful agnostic"). For the clever soldiers, his reliability was proven by his war-time service and his post-war work in Germany: he became a protégé of General Sir Ian Jacob, his predecessor as Director-General. "Without the launching pad of the old general he would never have become a major force within the culture", writes Tracey. One of the jobs Sir Ian gave him to do was organising psychological warfare against the rebels or bandits of Malaya in 1950.

When Greene eventually succeeded Jacob as Director-General, it was predicted that he would be less willing to "censor": it was said that there was only one man he would keep off the screen - Oswald Mosley. Tracey claims that this is untrue: there was no "absolute ban" on Oswald Mosley ever appearing on the BBC while Greene was DG: it would however have needed an extremely good reason to persuade Greene that an appearance by Mosley was justified. This seems not unlike Jacob's attitude. According to Tracey, however, Greene was inclined to be "machievellian" rather than officer-like when keeping undesirable material, like fascist propaganda, off the screen: he had rather more difficulty in the "middle ground" of politics, when faced by the Labour-Tory alliance of Harold Wilson and Charles Hill, professional politicians nibbling at the BBC's concept of independence.

In the BBC, with its tradition of "referring upwards", it is useful to have a liberal elder upstairs, a benevolent uncle or two, when attempting anything independent or controversial. When Greene became DG, he relied on the support of Sir Arthur Clode, the Chairman of the Governors, a former headmaster of Rugby, and a Christian, just the sort of man to support Hugh Greene, with integrity and courtesy, when he was under fire from censorious critics - whether they were dangerous or solemn fools or people worth taking seriously.

Another "liberal Christian", who has helped Tracey is Kenneth Lamb. When Lamb was Director of Public Affairs he came into my *Listener* office once to stare thoughtfully at my framed drawing of Lord Reith which fuelled my tendency towards pomposity and self-righteousness. "I've been looking at that face all morning", said Lamb. "In the BBC Council Chamber. A portrait by Oswald Birley. I distrust that visionary gleam. I prefer Ruskin Spear's portrait of Hugh Greene." That very portrait is on Tracey's dust-cover - a grinning, wry-smiling Puck, off duty but on the alert, very informal by comparison with Birley's grand, ceremonial Reith.

Lord Granada

Paul Smith

CAROLINE MOOREHEAD
Sidney Bernstein: A biography
259pp. Cape. £12.95.
024 019341

Lord Bernstein first said that he didn't want a biography, then that he didn't want to figure prominently in it. If that sounds like a classic case of shrinking into the limelight, it isn't: his shyness is genuine, and he can afford to indulge it. In "many hours of conversation" and voluminous files, he has given Caroline Moorehead very little hint of himself. Confronted with this unburied soul, she can do little more than track the passage of its corporeal envelope through the shifting scenes, defining the subject by his life-style, activities, friends. Sidney Bernstein in the 1920s, for example, is a man with a butler-cum-valet, riding in Rotten Row, smoking Sullivan and Powell cigarettes, driving a Minerva, and "beautifully but soberly dressed, in white shirts and dark-blue suits with a black-and-white checked tie and black Homburg". The apogee of this indirect style of character analysis is reached when Miss Moorehead tells us what he didn't eat and drink at the Guildhall banquet for the inauguration of independent television, which he didn't attend.

Beyond these externals it is hard to penetrate. There are lifelong interests in books, theatre design and art, as well as in cinema and

television. There is a huge cast of talented and famous friends in the creative arts, but even this lurches towards caricature. "Augustus John sometimes turned up, and so did the critic James Agate, and Jacob Epstein. On Sundays, the group might go to Epstein's studio in Hyde Park Gate; other days they went to Sidney and Violet Schiele's house in Cambridge Square, where they might find Wyndham Lewis, T. S. Eliot, and Iris and Alan Porter. It was an extraordinarily rich intellectual life." It sounds like it, but what the young Bernstein contributed to it or gained from it remains obscure.

That he was not just another obsessive money-maker is clear enough. The evidences of social conscience and political concern have always been strong. The Bernstein theatres were offered to trade unionists for their meetings during the General Strike; books bought in 1931 included the *Soviet Five-Year Plan* as well as Proust; the victims of fascism were succoured, the Spanish republicans supported. In 1945 Bernstein visited Belsen, and one of his disappointments was the frustration of his attempt to make a film on Nazi atrocities which would nail the guilty men, right down to the companies whose names appeared on concentration camp incinerators (a typical touch of attention to detail). M15 and the Americans thought they were dealing with a communist. But he was only a member of the Labour Party, patiently sitting through its annual conferences without saying a word. He seems to have concluded that Jerusalem was better built in Israel,

by which he became fascinated in later life. Being a Jew is rarely a matter of indifference, and to Bernstein it seems to be of fundamental importance: that means that we are not allowed to know anything about it. "As with most matters about which he cares greatly, however, he says little". Moorehead writes resignedly, reduced to disposing of one of the deepest aspects of her subject's personality in two-and-a-half pages.

In the end, Granada wins: all that can really be told is the success story, first in the cinema industry, then in the creation of commercial television. Starting out with the business into which his father had more or less stumbled with the building of the Edmonton Empire in 1908, already in his early twenties arranging film shows for Lloyd George and the royal family, Sidney Bernstein hardly put a foot wrong, except, perhaps, in his attempt to become a Hollywood producer after the Second World War - "if you will forgive my saying so", cabled Selznick in reply to a partnership offer, "probably need you less than you need me stop". The reputation for shrewdness and diplomacy he had achieved in the film business made him a natural choice for the organization of film propaganda when war came and for the difficult task of promoting British material in the United States (the enemy usually behaves

reasonably in war; allies are always impossible).

The supreme achievement, however, was the building up of Granada Television, and Moorehead conveys the excitement and the fun of the early, buccaneering days, when losses ran at £20,000 a week until the tide suddenly turned, perhaps not surprisingly when the company set off with a director of programmes who, when questioned about his plans, would say: "Television is an instantaneous medium. Wait till it starts. Then you'll make good programmes." Bernstein had opposed independent television, but he obviously found it just right for the rather journalistic radical populism that enabled him to make a political impact without the sordidness of politics. He must have been delighted when Granada "socialism" produced a rich example of Lord Hailsham's heavy boots style: "I cannot but think", wrote the Conservative party chairman, "that you would gain a little from our Organisation in preliminary discussions relating to particular programmes since we have a good deal of political experience." Pressure has always been something that Lord Bernstein puts on his employees ("No serious attempt has been made to pick paper up from the floor"), rather than something he has accepted from politicians, or even biographers.

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COMMENTARY

Orchestrating the future

Zinovy Zinik

DAVID POWNALL
Master Class
Old Vic

Let us not forget that Stalin was himself a poet who before the revolution wrote four highly praised poems which were published in a prestigious Georgian literary anthology. But had he really decided to force Prokofiev and Shostakovich to score a ludicrous imitation of a Georgian epic, as he does in David Pownall's *Master Class*, he would have done so for reasons which lie beyond purely poetical criteria. The words are offensively idiotic: "My woe! heart is a caravanserai . . . to him who is dying of poison, antidote is everything". What we see on the stage is how two musicians, almost literally scared to death - Prokofiev has just had a stroke and Shostakovich is about to have one - poisoned with interminable rounds of vodka, compete with each other to achieve perfect harmony of words and music.

Stalin would never personally have given instructions to composers on how to write music, but the fact is that Prokofiev and Shostakovich did write a number of heroic cantatas both before and after the notorious party directives about "formalistic perversion in the Soviet arts", and the texts of these ingenious cantatas are no less idiotic than the lines quoted above. Stalin on the stage is playing fool to the two mock-kings of his own creation, while Zhdanov plays the part of a hanger-on in full military uniform. He looks as though he has just returned from the Red Square parade, the state security apparatus at his disposal to orchestrate Soviet music. In real life Zhdanov would never have dared to call Stalin by his first name, let alone dared to argue with him. But the real Zhdanov did indeed have the state security apparatus at his disposal, using it to silence anyone who sounded out by line to his sensitive ear. The drunken revel that we see on the stage would never have taken place in the Kremlin; Stalin used to arrange such private parties, as we know from Milovan Djilas's account, at his dacha in Kuntsevo, where Khrushchev would dance a Ukrainian *gopak*. On the stage it is a tipsy Stalin, half Falstaff, half Marquis de Sade, who dances. But the Byzantine parody of a Kremlin cham-



An abstract composition by Kiril Zdanovich. One of the items in a sale of Russian works of art, to be auctioned at Sotheby's on February 15.

All in all, what David Pownall and his director Justin Greene have produced is not a dramatized documentary; it is rather like a political comic-strip in which the cartoonist uses the famous and infamous for his own purposes - in this case to reconstruct the totalitarian cultural mechanism of the so-called socialist people's democracies. It is only the music - a sophisticated blend of Soviet classical and folk music, written by musical director John White - which constitutes a factual proof that the imaginary macabre events we witness on stage actually had a profound, audible effect on life. From 1948 onwards, such patriotic songs and

"muscular linguistics" - his use of "he" and not "he/she", his favouring of the active rather than the passive voice. The offensive implications of her associating women with passive forms apparently eluded Macleod - as did many other things: outstandingly perverse, even in a speech thick with delusion, was her belief that Lawrence's attitude to women is more admirable than Orwell's since Lawrence enjoyed the benefit of being reared among non-sexist Nottinghamshire miners.

Paradoxically, this kind of assault on Orwell showed the continuing relevance of his insights. Certainly, Duckpeak - that which issues "from the larynx without involving the higher brain centres" - was amply audible during the day's proceedings. As a discussion of "Inside the Whale" was introduced, Angela Carter gave raptive intimations: "Oh my God, what crap!" - of her dissatisfaction with Orwell. Her subsequent talk briefly enlarged upon this, revealing that, at the age of twelve, she was pained by his book "agonized gentility". Strictures on "the British intelligentsia" and reminiscence about her father mystifyingly followed, though she would, she promised, eventually be returning to the supposed subject in order "to mug Orwell" with a heavyweight insight she was mentally hammering out. In the event, this cerebral cob never materialized. Instead, Carter feebly waved around cracked notions which fell apart as soon as you brought them into contact with what Orwell actually wrote, as with her assertion that *Homage to Catalonia* is "despairing" ("the whole experience" Orwell emphasized "has left me with . . . more belief in the neces-

heroic cantatas, dedicated to the theme of joyful socialist labour, were heard constantly from dawn to dusk issuing from those black plastic loudspeakers that are an almost obligatory fixture of every Soviet household, factory or institution, especially of the Siberian corrective labour camps where millions of political prisoners, half frozen to death, built hydro-electric stations, railways and canals to the accompaniment of optimistic music. So much for the accessibility of art to ordinary people.

It is this kind of popular, accessible music, that of human bones cracking in the Siberian frost and of skulls exploding from the impact of a bullet, that Stalin is thinking of when he confronts these two musical geniuses with the ultimate in moral blackmail. In the play his argument runs along the following lines: millions died for me that I could become a god; you perhaps do not like my cult, but you must have pity on the millions of abandoned orphans and their grandparents - and old folk don't like your dissonance. They need cheerful traditional tunes for their grandchildren to learn, to help them through the miseries of post-war life. It is a powerful argument, especially for Prokofiev, who returned to Soviet Russia after fifteen years of exile in the West, and for Shostakovich, too, who witnessed the horrors of the siege of Leningrad. More important, this tearful image of abandoned orphans is a reasonably honourable excuse for committing spiritual suicide, for betraying one's musical credo.

Stalin needed a special kind of music, the sound of which would eradicate any discontented individual note. For such a brilliant design he needed not only Zhdanov with the drum-rolls of his firing squads, but genuinely brilliant composers. But he also knew that people always need a good excuse for wickedness. The novelty of Stalin's dictatorship was based in his ability to make everyone an accomplice. Not just an accomplice by circumstance, but a willing one. To be merely scared is not enough. You must be scared enough to love the thing you hate. And then a good excuse to save your conscience will turn up. Orphans, for example, or Revolutionary Ideals. Unemployment. The differences between right wing dictatorship and Soviet communism. The hunger for accessible art. Anything will do. "To him who is dying of poison, antidote is everything."

After a dismal morning - only really enlivened by an entertaining, mimicry-pointed contribution from Angus Wilson - the afternoon started hearteningly. First of a series of pieces commissioned in response to Orwell's work was a fine account by William Boyd of a public execution in Nigeria. Sufficiently humane and steady to stand alongside Orwell's "A Hanging" without any incongruity, it gave an exhilaratingly precise description of grimly messy events. Equally invigorating was Blake Morrison's sardonic rhyming monologue about artists stifled by a Tory government taking them under its very right wing. Neat and inventive, the poem sustained a suavely satiric tone, with colloquialism pleasantly softening the click - but not the bite - of its couplets. With Maggie O'Sullivan, however, it was back to hobby-horses. Counterpointing the tremulous broodings of a wall-like wife on Greenham Common ("Hope streams from this tiny point into space") with a chorus of barked male abuse, she offered a crudely sexist dichotomy: women holding candles of hope, men with "sabres tied to their big red hard-ons". A gulf also yawned through the day's final item - a debate that proved exceptionally bifurcated in that no motion had been agreed on: one speaker, Raymond Williams, convolutedly groused about *Nineteen Eighty-Four*; the other, Hugh Thomas, briskly commented on *Homage to Catalonia*. Not surprisingly, this made for little dialogue. There were, however, welcome moments - especially when Thomas praised Orwell's courage, honesty and dedication to the English language. Resoundingly seconded by David Caute, this ensured that the day's deliberations often jarringly off-key - at least

Spectral forms

Galen Strawson

Ghost Dance
ICA Cinema

Ghost Dance, written, produced and directed by Ken McMullen, proposes to turn the notion of a ghost into a key concept for the times, and proceeds in seven titled sections. There is a Thesis, a Witness, a Trial and a Voice of Silence; there are Ritual, Myth and History, and *Ghost Dance* has certainly got an uncommon amount of Structure. Opening and closing sequences of water echo and reverse each other and, as with so many films, in its end is its beginning.

But although we see that it has structure, like a sentence in a strange language, we do not know what the structure is, or what its point is. If it somehow unites the disjointed incidents that make up the film, we don't know how. We haven't the ghost of a notion. True, the narrative fracture is itself part of the structure. But after fracture there are just fragments - fragments with disparate ostensible themes: political, emotional and environmental themes of decay, dissatisfaction and revolution; and philosophical and psychoanalytical themes of memory and desire, of the cunning of the Unconscious and the indirection of communication.

It is Jacques Derrida - the charming, handsome, rapidly blinking and superficially tentative M Derrida - who expounds the main theme. He is introduced to Pascale (Pascale Ogier), a moody, intriguing, *familière* graduate who is failing to get anywhere with her anthropology thesis, and has a talent for mindless, dissolving smiles. "Quelle est l'idée de ton idée?" asks Derrida; and she has no idea. He tries to help, and brings up the question of ghosts. He is caught *viva vita*: in a café, in his room at the École Normale, where a real telephone call interrupts him. He consciously breaks the frame of the film, commenting on the fact that they are making a film. (This point is also made by a twist of wool or old grasses that flickers periodically in a corner of the picture; it nags at the film frame's usually unquestioned claim to define a closed fictional reality.)

What does Derrida have to say about ghosts? Well, as soon as we open our mouths to speak we are involved in roles, and the ghosts of individual and collective memory put on their personae and come out to play. The "phantomachia" of the Unconscious is engaged. We are traversed by voices we do not really control, ventriloquized by ghostly verbal traces. We are creatures of memory to such an extent that we never really come face to face in the unmediated here and now. We are never truly present to one another (least of all when we make love, when, according to Freud, the whole host of ancestral ghosts stands over us). "Id est phantôme cest mot", as Derrida says to his absent and future audience. Wherever there is language there are ghosts. They write and deliver your letters, they run down the telephone wires and dally with omnibulation between each word, each letter of each word.

Derrida is a great improvisatore, gently working out the veins of his highly ramified conceit by a process of repetition with variation, moving fluently from one soft, suggestive "n'est-ce pas?" to the next, and absolutely dazzling Pascale. It is impressive. But it is also just one more, slightly forced way of putting some old Derridan themes about language, communications and absence - and, in the end, the carefully spatchcocked narrative episodes fail to bring Derrida's ingenious shades alive. "I walk like a bird", remarks Robbie Coltrane, who makes a winning appearance as a drunk yob obsessed by weather forecasts, and the ghosts drop off his language like dead flies.

So Derrida talks, and then the film just goes on without him; and although it is continuously visually interesting and rich (too rich) with interpretative possibility, it is not really going anywhere much. It fails, too, to avoid the sweet and powerful snares of left-wing sentimentality. It falls victim, though not without grace, to all the covert nostalgias of radical politics, in which the present is always falling (as History

To suit the occasion

Julian Barnes

EVELYN WAUGH
Essays, Articles and Reviews
Edited by Donat Gallagher
602pp, Methuen, £20.
0413 503704

In 1977 Donat Gallagher edited a selection of Evelyn Waugh's journalism called *A Little Order*. It was a varied, attractive collection of book reviews, travel pieces, prefaces and oped outbursts: 80,000 words or so of secondary Waviana. Mr Gallagher's introduction evinced a decent apprehension at the possible *l'es-majesté* of the operation: "Had he lived, would Waugh have collected his journalism? What pieces should be reprinted in a brief anthology? What claims to attention does this work of his have?" *A Little Order* was favourably reviewed, and one critic even went so far as to call the selection "regrettably meagre". The present volume is Gallagher's encore: a rare example of an encore four times the length of the original piece. If the editor did not know it at the time, somebody should have told him: Waugh will mean worse.

This present collection of Waugh is over 300,000 words long, and few will avoid the reflection that an alternative way of spending their time would be to reread half of Waugh's fiction. The title has been bumped up from the squeak of *A Little Order* to the grandiosely overlapping *Essays, Articles and Reviews* (like those inflated contributors' notes which refer to the same person as "writer, critic, journalist and broadcaster"). More seriously, and more sinisterly, the editor's ambitions have been reversed upwards. No mention is made in text or on jacket of Gallagher's repudiated earlier volume. Instead, fortified by the discovery that Waugh "certainly intended to collect a number of his most substantial pieces of journalism, or 'essays', as he called them", Gallagher has decided to give us a "complete" edition of the journalism. The inverted commas round "com-

plete" are not reviewer's sneers, but bashful editorial appendages:

This collection is "complete" in the sense that it is as comprehensive as the realities of publishing allow, and in that it seeks to include within one set of covers everything that any serious reader of Waugh might hope to find. The selection, in intention at least, is impersonal. Everything has been included that could reasonably be thought "important", either on account of its quality or its theme; so too has every piece known to have been commented on, favourably or unfavourably, by anyone; and everything that seems likely to be of assistance to students of Waugh.

This is one of the least confident statements of editorial policy I have ever read. "Complete" means, as it increasingly does nowadays, "jolly big"; while "important", also strangely becommenced, presumably means "fairly important". Gallagher declines to follow the dotted line of Waugh's own presumed intentions; on the other hand, he's not choosing his own favourite pieces. Or at least, not just this. "Impersonal", "reasonably be thought", "commented on, favourably or unfavourably, by anyone". Such criteria are as odd as their claim is reckless. Thus, David Lodge's essay "The Fugitive Art of Letters", in the well-known *Evelyn Waugh and His World* (edited by David Pryce-Jones, 1973), comments - favourably as it happens - on Waugh's 1962 profile "My Father". According to Lodge, this piece covers the same ground as *A Little Learning* but "is quite distinct, and in some ways . . . more revealing". What it reveals is not to be found here.

So what sort of a book is this? A collection not made by Waugh himself, not made actively by Gallagher, mandated by (necessarily incomplete) knowledge of what other critics have praised or blamed in Waugh's journalism, constricted by "the realities of publishing", yet intended to be "of assistance to students of Waugh". The phrases "students of Waugh" cannot help but summon up displeasing connotations. When the *Paris Review* interviewer asked Larkin what he'd learnt from his "study"

of Auden, Thomas, Yeats and Hardy, the reply was an exasperated: "Oh, for Christ's sake, one doesn't study poets! You read them, and think, That's marvellous, how is it done, could I do it? and that's how you learn." In the same way, Waugh is a curious writer to "study": it's possible to imagine studying other things - the class system, the Catholic Church in England, the Second World War - through his work, if that's what you feel like doing. But what is there to study in him? Waugh himself declared, in his essay on Chesterton: "A writer who cannot make his meaning clear to his own generation and their immediate successors is a bad writer."

But even if you convinced yourself of complexities and obscurities which required a stint of badger-digging, you wouldn't go to the journalism for it. Both Gallagher's collections, for instance, reprint Waugh's 1947 article on Californian burial customs. Students will thus be able to compare the Forest Lawn of Waugh's colour piece with the Whispering Glades of *The Loved One*. We can note what is common to both versions: the "Hindu Love-Song" Muzak, the "grade A steel and concrete" of the replica buildings, the racial restrictions on entry, the Slumber Room, the cosmetic problems with loved ones who have hanged themselves. We can note what Waugh altered and conflated: "the Wee Kirk o' the Heather" becomes "the Wee Kirk o' Auld Lang Syne"; the replica churches of Stoke Poges (with Gray connections) and Rottingdean (Kipling) are melted down into the church of St Peter Without-the-Walls, Oxford (and Shelley). We can mark down what he didn't need (the Memorial Court of Honour) and what he made up (the Lake Island of Innisfree). But do we see the novelist taking his journalistic account, beating the copper out thin and embellishing it until it serves as art? No. These aren't first and second drafts, but parallel accounts in different modes. Compare and contrast? If you will; it's slightly interesting. But the first version doesn't "explain" the second; and "students of

Waugh" will mislead themselves if they think it does.

What additions does Gallagher's second volume offer? Many more pages of religious journalism of restricted general interest; campaign reports from Abyssinia; additional attacks on Tito; several bluff pieces on drink (though not Waugh's long essay "Wine in Peace and War", written for Messrs Saccone and Speed, to which Gallagher does not even refer); a couple of highly sensible pieces on marriage and honeymooning; repetitive puffs for Nancy Mitford; numerous reviews of Greene and Bejeman; lesser travel pieces; and a few unexpected items, like a review of *La Dolce Vita* (which Waugh clears of blasphemy but condemns as inaccurate in its portrayal of the Roman aristocracy and intelligentsia).

At the start of his career Waugh used journalism as a means of getting his name known and promoting his novels ("I think it would be so convenient", he hinted fiercely to his agent A. D. Peters, "if the editors could be persuaded that I embodied the Youth Movement so that they would refer to me whenever they were collecting opinions"). In mid-career he used it to provide him with tax-free binges (in 1949, for two pieces, *Life* paid him \$5,000, of which \$4,000 could be consumed in expenses; "Spending money like a drunken sailor", wrote Waugh delightedly, and finally clocked up \$4,665). In later years he used it to prop up his finances when his books began to make less money, and also, it appears, as a sort of spiritual emetic - a rough finger down the throat whenever modern liberalism in church or state became more than he could digest. Such strong secondary motives are not unknown in Fleet Street, and are not generally held to be reprehensible; but they do suggest why such a collection of journalism can only expand to a certain point before it starts doing damage to itself. As you read on, repetitions obtrude; the limits to Waugh's interest in the outside world become starker.

As a polemicist, Waugh is adept at the

Coming up for airing

Peter Kemp

Public Writers' Day
Barbican

"I would like to know why he's being celebrated since he seems to have done so little good writing", someone sarcastically interjected from the audience during *Public Writers' Day*, a symposium organized by The Writers' Guild and Capital Radio as part of the Barbican's Orwell fortnight. The outburst was understandable since, throughout the day, Orwell's work repeatedly served as an Aunt Sally for off-target sneers and jeers. Frequently, too, speakers wandered far away from it in order to leave themselves on a hobby-horse: Salman Rushdie trotted out his views on colonialism; Michael Foot - "I may have strayed off . . . widdly, meandered around Swift."

Others treated Orwell as a whipping-boy. In a speech resembling *Nineteen Eighty-Four's* Two Minutes' Hate in everything but brevity, Sheila Macleod denounced him as an advocate of simplicity who ignored the crimes committed in its name - not least, those against women. Given Orwell's scathing parody, in *NewSpeak*, of simplistic language from which "shades of meaning had been purged", this seemed to him a simplistic charge to bring against him. But Macleod was not one to have her attitude deflected by qualification - or consistency. Orwell, she contradicted, in related, demands that language have a "mainly stiff upper lip" and be "a defenceless virgin".

Macleod's remarks on Orwell's . . . at human beings . . .

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ALEXANDER THEROUX
Darconville's Cat
704pp. Hamish Hamilton. £8.95.
0241 09655

The eccentric fictional genre usually called the Learned Novel often takes as one of its central ironies the impotence of intellect in the face of a universe which is indifferent or hostile or mad. In an unknowable world, erudition can never be other than futile, and the style of the novel, the making of the pattern, itself becomes the subject. *Darconville's Cat* is a novel in this tradition; it is not surprising that Alexander Theroux has also written a thesis on the language of Samuel Beckett, the great contemporary master of the theme of intellect isolated from reality.

Learning, seen in this light, becomes comic or ironic, though it can paradoxically retain a dignity that brings it to the borders of tragedy. Theroux packs his novel with arcane lore in a dozen languages and from a hundred fields of enquiry, from the history of eunuchs to the properties of poisons, citing along the way Johannes Goropius Becanus and Kalliphonous of Gadara as well as better-known authorities from Homer to S. J. Perelman.

Like *Tristram Shandy*, which it resembles in length and looseness of structure, *Darconville's Cat* is composed from a wide variety of forms and styles. There is a sermon and a sonnet and a scaled-down drama in blank verse. One chapter is a classical oration after Quintilian, another is a long and revoltingly ingenious list of methods of torture and execution, another is one word long (the word is "ample"). Chapter sixty-eight, "The Misogynist's Library", consists entirely of a catalogue of anti-feminist writings, some 500 in number, ranging from the genuine to the fictitious (Sherlock Holmes's *Practical Handbook of Bee Culture*, *With Some Observations Upon the Segregation of the Queen*) to the fantastic (*How to Tell Your Mother from a Wolf*, by Roland S. Truhenkay). There is a brief but densely argued essay on Love near the beginning and another on Hate near the end, each argument being a mirror image of the other. There are substantial quotations from imaginary books, including Dr Abel Crueller's *Christianity and the Ages Which It Darkened* - a perversely

ingenious attack on Socrates - and *I Knew Rhoda Rumpswab* (Troilism Press, NY), a work of crude but energetic salacity. We have the final examination paper for a course on Great Southern Writers ("How is Henry Timrod's brilliant poem *Ethnogenesis* in the same epic tradition as Milton's *Paradise Lost*?"), and a learned digression on ears.

The story out of which this exotic jungle of material exfoliates is a simple one. Alaric Darconville, American but with aristocratic European antecedents, has arrived to teach English at Quinsy College, Quinsyburg, Virginia. A glamorous figure in the fin-de-siècle romantic fashion (as well as being darkly handsome he has been a monk, keeps a human skull on his desk, dresses in black and is writing a book on angelology), Darconville breaks Quinsy hearts like chinaware, but he has eyes only for Isabel Rawthorne, a student in his freshman class with whom he falls instantly and violently in love. His passion is returned, a series of misunderstandings and jealousies are overcome, and Isabel and Darconville, soon engaged, dwell in arcadian bliss.

As the date for the wedding nears, however, Isabel shows ominous signs of hesitation and a worrying reluctance to communicate with Darconville, who now has a job at Harvard. At length she confesses that she's fallen in love with someone else, a lumpy but well-heeled Virginian neighbour called Gilbert van der Slang. Darconville's love veers violently to hatred and he falls into the hands of the sinister Dr Crucifer, a diabolical Harvard professor who dwells in gothic luxury in a suite of rooms hidden away at the top of Adams House (it turns out that Crucifer really is a devil, though this is characteristically communicated in a passage written in Latin and printed backwards). Crucifer urges Darconville to bloody revenge and he sets out to murder his faithless lover, but at the last moment is granted a vision in which he sees the power of art to place experience beyond the reach of time, and so to make possible repentance and redemption. Riddled by illness, Darconville retires to his decaying family palazzo in Venice and writes the story of his love and hate, finishing just before the moment of his ghastly but ecstatic death.

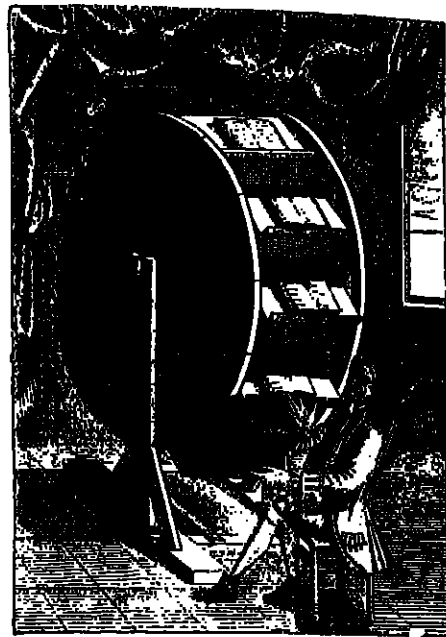
Darconville believes, in fact, that experience has to be avoided in order for him to be able to

write, but the richness of his imaginative life can't insulate him from suffering. His imagination is even the source of his pain because, as he comes to see, his love for Isabel has been an imaginative invention, the transmuting into a goddess of a commonplace, silly, snobbish girl.

The world is as shallow and treacherous as Isabel herself; only art can redeem it, which is why the artfulness of *Darconville's Cat* is the novel's real subject. Theroux's imagination is prodigiously fertile, though not all its offspring are equally well-formed. His vocabulary explodes with nonce-words and coinages, some classical in origin ("kaleidogyns"), some invented by Theroux or others ("wopsical", "nopsters"); often the two are combined ("cacochymical scroyles"). The horrid Dr Crucifer gurgles at his food and, when indignant, utters in a shrill piping hoon. The Quinsy girls write little poems in pedantic sentimeter and the *grandes dames* of Virginian society will speak to no one who isn't someone and then only in the pluperfect.

Theroux's writing is at its most energetic in a series of satiric set pieces, most of them in the first half of his novel. His targets vary, but he aims most persistently at the state of Virginia, its inhabitants and landscape, and particularly the pseudonymous town of Quinsyburg and the College located there. Both are lightly disguised; Theroux provides precise and copious geographical references and no one with access to an adequate road map of the area will have the slightest difficulty identifying either.

The prose in these passages is animated by a savage fecundity of invective worthy of Baron Corvo, with whom Darconville, with his monastic past, baroque prose style and love of cats, has much in common. The satire is powered by a deep loathing ("haters vote in the rain", as Dr Crucifer puts it) which gives the novel its dominant tone, and in which it is impossible not to believe that we are hearing the author's own voice. Theroux takes care to identify himself with his hero through their common ancestor, the distinguished and perfectly real French-lady of letters Marie Genevieve Charlotte Theroux-d'Arconville. Many of his most ferocious assaults are directed at targets remote from the novel's minimal plot - the town and society of Charlottesville, Virginia, for example, and the faculty at Harvard. There are oblique allusions to characters who



"Reading wheel desk", from Popular Scientific Recreations, c 1881, by Gaston Tissandier; this charming invention illustrates an article by Stanley Shoop on "Nineteenth Century Science and Technology: Excursions and Diversions", in a recent issue of The Private Library (see below).

never appear in the story at all, particularly to someone whose name seems to be Linda Burton, and the phrase "black duchess", with variations, recurs with mysterious persistence.

It seems clear that on one level the novel is an allegory or dark conceit, but its interest for most readers will lie in the more accessible pleasures it has to offer: its quirky structure, stylistic virtuosity and satiric bite, as well as its zoo-full of memorable minor characters like Quinsy College's crass and blatant President Greatracks, "a fake giant among real pygmies", or kindly old Professor McGentroom of Harvard, who looks as though he couldn't find the holes in a bowling ball but is the recent author of a mastery biography of Weef VI.

Darconville's Cat has its flaws: many of its crotchets become tedious with repetition, there is far too much of Dr Crucifer's polyglot rant and there are moments of irritating preciosity. But these are faults of excess, over-spillings of the authentic energy that fuels this eccentric, learned, savage and funny book.

Defence without frenzy

D. D. R. Owen

CHRISTINE DE PIZAN
The Book of The City of Ladies
Translated by Earl Jeffrey Richards
281pp. Pan Books: Picador. £8.95
(paperback, £2.95).
0330 283243

It would be hard to find a more sympathetic exponent of the feminist cause than Christine de Pizan. Widowed at twenty-five after an ideally happy marriage and having, she says, to adopt a man's rôle in the world, she played out the rest of her life in the minor key to die, ironically, just as Joan of Arc was putting some of her principles into spectacular practice. Throughout her widowhood she found much consolation in books and learning and in the exercise of her own considerable literary gifts.

Not all of her extensive output in verse and prose has yet been edited. That is the case with the *Cité des Dames*. Earl Jeffrey Richards's intention had been to produce a bilingual edition; but sadly this was prevented by "the exorbitant cost", so we must be content with this very readable translation from the reliable Harley 4431 manuscript. An excellent intro-

duction and notes, together with a foreword by Marina Warner, put the work succinctly into context.

The Book of the City of Ladies, a prose text, occupies a central place in Christine's writings. Its modish allegorical frame is not too heavy; and it allows us to see Christine herself, under the orders and supervision of the three queens Reason, Rectitude and Justice, bending her back to the construction of the fair city, plying pick, trowel, rule and line until the topmost battlement is in place. This is to be the residence and stronghold of "all ladies of fame and women worthy of praise"; and the book is largely a "who's who" of paragons of female virtue, ranging from Minerva to Christine's patron Queen Isabella and from Susanna to the Virgin Mary, who consents to "live and abide most happily among my sisters and friends".

This is the first known book written in French by a woman on women. Christine says her inspiration came as she browsed through the work of a minor poet who was so contemptuous of her sex that she was shaken to the point where "I considered myself most unfortunate because God had made me inhabit a female body in this world". Thereupon the three queens appeared with their reassuring commission. Paradoxically, Christine was greatly indebted to male writers, notably Boc-

caccio and Vincent of Beauvais, for her subject-matter. But Dr Richards shows how she has selected and reorganized her gleanings with considerable acumen and added a good number of personal details and examples. We often catch the sound of her own voice and are left in no doubt that her heart was wholly in her work.

To a modern feminist not every sentiment here is likely to appeal. Reason, for instance, approves the saying that "God made women to speak, weep and sew". There is no question of equal opportunities, for "God has . . . ordained man and woman to serve Him in different offices"; and the legal profession is cited as the province of men only. Nor would the spectacle of Amazons and other super-women battling like knights and putting defeated opponents to the sword raise three cheers at Greenham Common. Yet truer to Christine's ideal, one feels, is Reason's advice that it is the feminine nature to be simple, tranquil, composed and respectful. Was she sincere in crediting various women of legend with such inventions as the Latin alphabet, Greek and Egyptian shorthand, armour and army organization, flutes and sundry other instruments, agriculture, horticulture, numbers and counting? Perhaps, for she accepts Reason's contention that the female mind is freer and sharper

than the male, so long as women are not house-bound and have equal access to education. Here she is certainly in line with modern thinking, as too in her views on the abuse of women, whether by drunken wife-beaters or by rapists with their arguments that many women, despite their protests, welcome the experience.

This attractively presented translation makes widely available for the first time a key document in the heated debate provoked by Jean de Meung's misogynistic slanders that filled his continuation of the *Romance of the Rose* a century before Christine's day. She laid much of the blame for the permissiveness of her own times on Jean and was largely responsible for kindling this famous Quarrel, the intellectuals' equivalent of the Hundred Years' War, that rages still. But she was no frenzied Delacroix-style revolutionary, flinging herself, bra-less and with feminist banner flying, against the monstrous regiment of phalocrats. Often she seems more a gentle (in both senses) headmistress gravely reproving, earnestly exhorting her pupils to stick to their books and develop their talents as far as decorum and the establishment permit. In her allegory, though, she casts herself rather as the pupil, listening wide-eyed as Reason and her companions assure her that woman is not, after all, a puzzling aberration on God's part.

Latest quest

Deborah Boreham

FLORENCE DELAY
Riche et Légère
255pp. Paris: Gallimard. Fr.70.
207 0266982

Genres, certainly in the pure state, seem to belong to particular eras. There was a time after which the solemn romances of court chivalry were no longer acceptable unless served up, as by Jean de Meung, in an ambiguous way. Yet the genre survived, tainted by the profanities of *fabliaux*, displaced into pastoral allegory, parodied and naturalized almost out of all recognition. Today it might be seen, in a somewhat reductionist account, as the persistence of a male fantasy, and many of our own tales of lost illusions draw sustenance from such a curiously compelling tradition.

In collaboration with Jacques Roubaud, Florence Delay has written a number of plays with Arthurian themes which taken together constitute a Grail cycle, but her fourth novel, *Riche et Légère*, winner of the 1983 Prix Fémina, though it contains a kind of quest, belongs to a very different tradition. Anglo-American fiction of the past two decades has provided many examples of it: a woman nearing middle age, tired of a demanding husband and free of the children who have tied her to the marital home, embarks on a series of adventures: she travels, gets an exciting and bewildering job, has an affair with a younger man, takes LSD and frees herself from the shackles of conventional behaviour, becomes a feminist etc. She may do all of these things; but whether she is a success or a failure the author wins out: a male-dominated society has been successfully indicted. Or she may do none of them, and suffer throughout, Eugénie Grandet in a high-rise flat. A literature of pure paths has been developed along these lines.

We have moved on a little since then, and although problems specific to the female soul continue to occupy the majority of women writers, few of them would dare contemplate the romping soap-opera Florence Delay makes of her heroine's "liberation". Reminiscent of the earlier Andrea Newman but in a style redolent of Glide's immoral awakening, *Riche et Légère* takes its divorcee to an appropriately exotic setting in Spain. Here she meets up with a collection of expatriates, vagabonds and *drifters*, each of whom conceals some tormenting secret. The ghost of Lucie's father, a Peruvian guitarist called Indio, haunts the book as she encounters the people and places associated with him. Sebastian, an eighty-year-old poet, whispers all kinds of philosophies into Lucie's ear as he is introduced to Constance, the incestuous English girl, Indio Jones (sic) the pederast, and Dorotea, the lesbian

who is in love with Constance. Lucie spends the night with Constance's brother Henry, and this somehow relieves Lucie of the guilt she has been feeling at not being present at her father's death bed. . . . All is resolved - the heroine has found herself.

Liberation, then, in the raw. There is a kind of wilful insularity about the French literary scene, which makes such an indulgence as this possible and even necessary. The heroine sprawls on the bed, daydreams, yearns and contemplates her femininity in the familiar 1960s fashion, quite as if she were the first ever to do these things in a book. There is some charm, even, in this *naïveté*, but the charm is not compelling. Ms Delay's novel does not involve, as real literature does, the full personality of the mature reader. Even that last sentence seems grotesquely to unleash F. R. Leavis on Harold Robbins.



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224pp, illus., cloth £19

University of Pennsylvania Press
1 Gower Street, London WC1

More white mischief

Roy Kerridge

BUCHI EMECHETA
The Rape of Shavi
178pp. Ogunwuvu Afar, 7 Briston Grove,
Crouch End, London N8. £7.95.
0950817716

Like Doris Lessing, Buchi Emecheta writes vividly her first impressions of England, a country she can never quite understand. In their early semi-autobiographical novels, Lessing becomes Martha Quest and Emecheta writes of herself as Adah. Now with *The Rape of Shavi*, it looks as though Emecheta is going to follow Lessing into decline by way of futuristic fantasy.

Shavi is an imaginary country set on the fringe of the Sahara Desert, possibly to the north of Nigeria. For all that, it is recognizably Emecheta's own "the land", and somehow evokes an atmosphere of great trees and forest clearings, complete with the distant cries of "desert parrots", a species as yet unknown to science. To this land, where white men are quite unknown, comes an unlikely hotch-potch of hippie-type Europeans who are fleeing an unspecified nuclear catastrophe. Most of the plot follows that of the standard adventure story, married by a moralistic tone. A plane crashes among strange tribespeople; white visitors are made welcome by the local king; they find precious stones, repair their plane and escape just as they are going to be forcibly married to native girls. The king's son and heir shows away and has adventures of his own in England.

Writing quickly and carelessly, as if in a bad temper throughout, Emecheta succeeds in spoiling this classic yarn. The white intruders have names like Ista, Ronje and Dorf, to emphasize their international rootlessness, compared with the well-balanced Shavians of Africa. The only character in the book who almost comes to life is the scientist Flip, who emerges as a big roly-poly bear of a man, very hairy and given to jogging. The people of Shavi, most of whom are doomed to an early death from syphilis contracted from Ronje, die the white men repulsive. They compare them to orang-utans, which is clever of them as these apes live in far-off Borneo. However, it later transpires that the utans, whose name means "Man of the Woods" in Malayan, also thrive among the sands of Shavi. Shavians speak in tribal "tribes-English" so that when they refer to the newcomers as "immigrants" with a unique "culture", it comes as a surprise. A witchdoctor talks like Enoch Powell prophesying rivers of blood, but this analogy is not pursued. In their escape from war, the crew reached Africa in a minute and a half, and then spent days wondering what continent they were on. What kind of top scientist is Flip?

This and other questions go unanswered. Finally, when the crew reach England once more, leaving the Shavians corrupt, unsettled and ruined, they find that nothing at all has happened in their absence after all. Prince Aogaba, the stowaway, is seized by a policeman and dragged straight to Pentonville as an illegal immigrant. There he learns "black military" from "West Indians", filled with bitter hatred, he returns to Shavi and completes the ruin of his people. Here the story ends - compared with Doris Lessing's epics it is merely short.

Derring do-ers

Christopher Hope

COLIN ANDREW McLAREN
The Warriors Under the Stone
181pp. Rex Collings. £6.50.
086036 1993

Bookshelves in remote African farm libraries once held fat, musty books in billious colours; on their covers boys in hilariously long shorts hunted snarling black men among the *Kopjes*. These gripping yarns of derring-do struck fear into the heart of many a school-child. If this was Africa one did not recognize it; if this was reading one did not want it. In *The Warriors Under the Stone*, Colin McLaren has set out to write a relentlessly jaunty, *Boy's Own* pastiche of just such a yarn.

From Victorian London, one-eyed Jabez Rimmer, editor of *The Illustrated London Chronicle*, and his rotund assistant, Mathew Mark, set out for Southern Africa with a commission from Rider Haggard to investigate a nasty case of gun-running in the Portuguese province of Gazaland. The plot soon takes on the consistency of what the Afrikaners call *sygne pyp*, porridge, so thick and rubbery it bounces. Gold and smuggled diamonds, Cecil Rhodes, great power rivalries, slavers, half-castes, lost cities, lots of crocodiles and an opera singer all go into the mix. Jabez Rimmer, and his plump evangelist are accompanied by the resolute Miss Phipps of the Digger Detective Agency and the irrepressible cockney scamp, young Tompkins of the Social Democratic League, at whose passion for the "inalienable rights of man" McLaren fires a hundred comic darts which do not so much strike as flud home. We have, besides the intrepid sten-

ographer and the cheeky cockney, a comical Indian, a cowardly Arab slaver and a French sea captain who talks like "zis". McLaren's heroes resemble those tough eggs who return from the jungle to play havoc with the affections of P. G. Wodehouse's heroines. But in Wodehouse, these blocks with their dictatorial moustaches and gimlet eyes receive their just deserts. In *The Warriors Under the Stone* they carry the day.

Of course those early tales of pluck in darkest Africa took themselves very seriously, but too many bearers have crossed the river since then for McLaren to make the same mistake: his signals as much by writing, as it were, with his elbows. Bruised by the constant nudging of his prose, dazed by the merciless, clanging alliteration, the reader is driven to the conclusion that McLaren has come close to concocting the sort of African adventure that gave the form a bad name without a trace of the earnest sincerity that was its chief, perhaps its only, distinguishing mark. His publishers have entered into the spirit of things by putting the novel between covers showing black bearers fording a swamp which conveys exactly the disabling mixture of unreality and inaccuracy that characterized the true original.

The Summer 1983 number of *The Private Library*, the journal of the Private Libraries Association (Third Series, Volume 6 No 2, 96pp. 0032 8898) contains, as well as the article by Stanley Shoop from which the picture above is taken, articles on "Odd Volumes", by Claude A. France, "Facsimiles of Medieval Illuminated Books", by J. G. Libbeck, "Collecting", by E. Phillips Oppenheim, by Ellen Westman and Wray D. Brown; and three pages of reviews.

Translations of the two major prose works of Raymond Roussel, *Locus Solus* and *Impressions of Africa*, have recently been reissued in paperback. *Locus Solus* (translated by Rupert Copeland and Cunningham, 254pp. John Calder, £4.95), originally published in 1914 and published in English in 1970, takes its title from the secluded estate near Paris of Martial Canterlet, a "scientist" whose enormous wealth enables him to indulge a taste for fantastical ingenuity. In the course of the novel he demonstrates and exaggerates his inventions to a group of visitors. As Canterlet's devices become more and more elaborate, the richness and brilliance of Roussel's stories grow to match them. *Of Impressions of Africa* (317pp. John Calder, £4.95), originally published in 1910, the TLS reviewer

wrote, on the first appearance in 1966 of this translation by Rayner Heppenstall and Lindy Foord: "First we are mystified, then enlightened; first we are shown a series of isolated representations [concerning a carnival in honour of an African king's coronation] and then they are joined together. Roussel's precocious aim in fact was to define beyond argument what fiction had to consist in if it was to be fiction. . . . To his representations he gives the status of facts and to the narrative that joins them that of fiction. Fiction . . . is therefore pure imagination. . . . It is moreover . . . an attempt at restoration, because through a fiction we can recover something of the lost unity of our original perceptions, now turned by time into a lumber-room of images."

With the best of intentions

Tom Disch

OGDEN NASH
I Wouldn't Have Missed It: Selected Poems
Edited by Linell Smith and Isabel Eberstadt
407pp. André Deutsch. £9.95.
0233 975896

For the forty years of Ogden Nash's career as America's foremost white-collar humorist, the popular success of his books of light verse expressed the consensus view of the reading public: poet, they say, dislike it. Dislike, that is, the oracular assumptions that most poets make, their claims to a higher wisdom, a more finely-turned awareness and larger emotions than are found to obtain elsewhere in the middle class. Nash had no such pretensions. He wrote his verses about just those subjects that a well-behaved dinner guest might use for conversational fodder in mixed company. He was the very beau ideal that Emily Post commended to her genteel readers in her perdurable *Etiquette*: "What he says is of no moment. It is the twist he gives to it, the intonation, the personality he puts into his quip. . . . Our greatly beloved Will Rogers could tell a group of people that it had rained today and would probably rain tomorrow, and make everyone burst into laughter. . . ."

But while Mrs Post approved humour, she feared, justly, the subversive power of wit: "The one in greatest danger of making enemies is the man or woman of brilliant wit. If sharp, wit tends to produce a feeling of mistrust even when it stimulates. . . . [P]erfectly well-intentioned people, who mean to say nothing unkind, in the flash of a second 'see a point', and in the next second score it with no more power to resist than a drug addict has to refuse a dose put into his hand!" It was by his shrewd abstinence from saying anything that might give offence, by his spirit's entire accord with the principles set forth in the Post decalogue (the first edition of *Etiquette* appeared in 1922, when Nash was twenty), that Nash secured for his verses an audience (and for himself an income) larger than that enjoyed by any American poet of his time.

In the first poem he placed with the *New Yorker* (where he would soon after be employed), Nash already defined himself as the spokesman and representative of the white-collar audience that felt a kindred complacent malaise about the terms of their employment and the dimensions of their lives:

I sit in an office at 244 Madison Avenue
And say to myself: You have a responsible job,
haven't you?
Why then do you fritter away your time on this
dodgerel?
If you have a sore throat you can cure it by using a
good gargle.
If you have a sore foot you can get it fixed by a
chiroprapist.

From the hip

Brian Morton

MIKE ZWERIN
Close Enough for Jazz
239pp. Quartet. £9.95.
07043 24008

"Back swing, Mabler doomp!" "LBJ was funky, not a swinger." "Hitler was funky, Iago swung. Funky Charles Manson swung." Like Norman Mailer, Mike Zwerin hasn't been impervious to the lure of the lower depths; nor has he been able to resist the temptation to theorize, rather than doing what he does best, which is making music.

Real swingers, funky or otherwise, probably don't care about the difference and are unlikely to have heard of either Mabler or Iago. Zwerin and Mailer were nice, intelligent, Jewish boys who chose to be bad. A gifted musician and bright student, Zwerin was driven against his hip instincts into the family company, Dome Steel Corporation, as president. His rebellion was pronounced but hidden behind the game-played door: descriptions of cowboy boots, a silver beanie box illicit sex on the desktop, all tend to disguise the fact that

And you can get your original sin removed by St John the Bopodist,
Why then should this flocculent lassitude be incurable?

Kansas City, Kansas, proves that even Kansas City needn't always be Missourible.
Up up my soul! This inaction is abominable.
Perhaps it is the result of disturbances abdominal.

The pilgrims settled Massachusetts in 1620 when they landed on a stone hummock.
Maybe if they were here now they would settle my stomach.

Oh, if I only had the wings of a bird
Instead of being confined on Madison Avenue I could soar in a jiffy to Second or Third.
("Spring Comes to Murray Hill")

Already in these first magazine verses Nash displayed all the tricks and tropes that were to become his trademarks: orthographic defor-



A drawing by Ogden Nash

mation for the sake of a rhyme-forced hyperpun; the use of the archaic vocabulary and syntax of inspirational schoolroom poetry, a venerable gambit, which Nash deploys to mock his own pretensions and aspirations; and (a device that Nash virtually copyrighted, though he did not invent it) the elastic couplet, or Nash Rambler (TM), that can grow to any length provided it's stopped by a rhyme. Anthony Burgess gives the Rambler its due in his very brief pastiche "Introduction", in which he declares: "I am trying to imitate him here, but he is probably quite imitable. / My own talent for this sort of thing being limited and his virtually illimitable". For Burgess as toastmaster, Nash transcends all forms of criticism but polite applause: "In the face of the unanalysable I must not be apalytical. / And when a writer is beyond criticism it is stupid to go all critical". Or, as Thumper's mother advised Bambi: "If you can't say something nice about someone, you shouldn't say anything at all."

Nash had another mode, not so patently his, but one no less essential to his position as

part of Zwerin has always remained detached, even conventional. Never quite able to throw himself completely into the jazz musician's world, he became a jazz critic, writing for Mailer's *Village Voice* from 1964 to 1968 and then for a string of magazines (encompassing *Rolling Stone*, *Playboy* and *Reader's Digest*) before settling in Paris with the *International Herald Tribune*.

Zwerin's book-jackets point to his "impeccable jazz credentials" and indeed he has played with some impressive names (though it's tempting to wonder if they weren't more impressed with his writing). In the 1950s, he joined Miles Davis in the ur-Birth of the Cool band, though he was not among the musicians who recorded that album; he played with Claude Thornhill in his declining years, Maynard Ferguson at his peak, and with Earl Hines. Too often, his recollections are little more than a list of the hip put-downs thrown his way, mostly by Miles Davis: "you've got good-time . . . for a white cat". Zwerin is honest enough to admit his borderline status with his heroes; few people get the chance to sit in the same room, let alone to collaborate with them.

A passionate believer in "balkanization" and a good internationalist, Zwerin was a leading figure in the "Third Stream" synthesis of

laureate to Middle America—the mini-maxim. "In the Vanities / No one wears panities" and, apropos of Baby, "A bit of talcum / Is always walcum" are fair samples. The object of these Ad-Age adages is not so much to be witty and epigrammatic as to be remembered and produced at the appropriate cue, to become a supply of verbal small change for those whose sense of humour is limited to rote performance. In my childhood, in the 1940s in Minnesota, Nash's most famous mini-maxim, "Reflection on Ice-Breaking", ("Candy / Is dandy / But liquor / Is quicker") was trotted out on all occasions of ceremonial imbibing, always with the same preliminary chuckle of obeisance to the god of mirth and catch-phrases.

Time has not been kind to these jingles, since it is difficult to be at once pithy and innocuous, but even Nash's most skillful droleries suffer for being heaped together into a *Selected Poems*. Candy may be tasty one piece at a time, but this is a gross of Snickers. Very soon the sameness of the product will cloy for even the avidest consumer. If there must be a big book, why not go whole hog and give us Nash's Complete Poems? There is no rationale given for the poems excluded (of the 101 poems from *Versus* of 1949, forty-one are reprinted) and no attempt to produce a semblance of variety by including the lyrics Nash wrote for the musical *One Touch of Venus* or any sample of his books for children. Anything to take the curse of sameness off the enterprise would have been welcome.

Measured against the general level of accomplishment in any standard anthology of humorous verse, Nash's limitations are glaringly evident. Narrative is not in his line, nor comic monologue (one must observe to be able to mimic), nor (least of all) satire, nor yet parody. His frame of intellectual reference remained, until his death in 1971, that of a well-brought-up eleven-year-old, and his allusive power is limited accordingly. His attention to public events is nil. He has no *bêtes noires*, only pet peeves: uncomfortable beds, incompetent caddies, anything smelly or noisy or odd-tasting. He has but a single persona—Dagwood.

What is left, and what Nash was best at, is word-play, as in "The Lama", where, after doubting whether a "three-llama" anywhere exists, he caps his verses with a prose footnote: "The author's attention has been called to a type of conflagration known as the three-alarm. Pooh." Yet for every poem that's genuinely risible, *I Wouldn't Have Missed It* offers a dozen that range from perfunctory to bromide.

Finally it was not Thalia, that sharp-tongued shrew, who was Nash's muse, but Emily Post, who advised, concerning "The Code of a Gentleman": "Exhibitions of anger, fear, hatred, embarrassment, ardor, or hilarity are all bad form in public." No one can say of Ogden Nash that he was not a gentleman.

formal and improvised music and in "ethnic" experiments like Indo-Jazz. His tastes and competences are catholic and impressive; from Eric Dolphy and Sun Ra through Shankar, Cage, Stockhausen, Kurt Weill to Telephone, the French rock band; Zwerin has been a tireless propagandist and promoter and has won the respect—if sometimes less than wholehearted—of many kinds of musicians. *Close Enough for Jazz* betrays him as a man on the fringes, well away from the extremes and excesses of creative energy. The trombone is an observer's instrument, comfortably set between the highs and lows of trumpets and saxophones. As a performer, Zwerin is endlessly competent, reliable, rather than innovative. His memoir really only falters when it resorts to Zwerin's version of spontaneous bop prose. It's easy to say that he is trying to express the inexpressible but his take-it-or-you-aren't-hip throwaways are grating intrusions in what is otherwise a warmly humane and funny jazz autobiography. Many classic jazz autobiographies, such as Mezz Mezzrow's and Billie Holiday's, were incognito (or ghosted). Zwerin has more to offer and shouldn't need to rely on the au-fait "White Negro" posturing that he resorts to when his intelligence and sense of irony threaten his integrity as a swinger.

Farcical goings-on

Eric Korn

MICHAEL FRAYN
The Original Michael Frayn: Satirical Essays
Edited by James Fenton
240pp. Edinburgh: Salamander Press. £8.50 (paperback, £4.95).
0907540325

In the preface to this welcome regrouping of Frayn's selected-but-out-of-print and heretofore uncollected short pieces from the *Guardian* and the *Observer* in the 1960s, James Fenton asserts that Frayn's early books are so esteemed and sought after as to be unfindable "in all the likely second-hand bookshops". Piqued, I searched my own stock: there was *The Day of the Dog* (1962), there *The Book of Fob* (1963), here was *On the Outsides* (1964); but since someone, doubtless myself, had written "not for sale" / "do not borrow or steal" / "Lay off" on the flyleaves, I suppose Fenton's point stands. There is an eager audience of 1960s survivors who have been waiting to rediscover that piece about carry-cots, that one about Old English Cocktail Olives (I must avoid going on like this), that deathless one entitled "I said 'My name is 'Ozy' Manders, Dean of Kings'". Young persons who know Frayn only as playwright or novelist will likewise be doing themselves a bad turn if they assume this recollection is only of archaeological or geriatric interest, though I cannot speak for anyone else's sense of humour and there is doubtless the odd curmudgeon in yurt or igloo who will not get a shock of joyful recognition.

Despite its subtitle, *The Original Michael Frayn* is not all satire. Such targets as Horace and Doris Morris, the upreeping Lavinia and Christopher Crumble, Rollo Swavely and Christopher Smootie, MP (by now doubtless Lord Lanolin of Blandford) are only peppered in passing: the more durable victims are those big enough to hit back, such as the Class of all Classes that Contains Itself (the epistemological pratfall, or "how do you know that there is fog on the motorway if it is too foggy to see the sign that says 'FOG?'"), or God the Father. His representative on earth, which Frayn calls the Carthaginian Monolithic Church in order to avoid being indexed, takes some sustained injury, which time has not healed or softened, in a just and savage piece on the theology of rear-view mirrors, diabolical artificial devices that frustrate the divine command, first given to Lot, not to look back. (The Carthaginian Monolithic Church recommends driving only during the "safe period": *Visus interruptus* is certainly sinful.) Incidentally, God's other representative on earth, Auberon Waugh, also comes in for some stick.

But Frayn's future, or rather future perfect, dramatic development is foreshadowed (this may be Fenton's doing) in a number of strikingly theatrical pieces, most notably where he exchanges the scalpel for the custard pie (wouldn't it be pleasant if there were shops where you could do that), the method of predilection for the method of cumulation, the timing of the epigrammatist for that of the farceur. I have been recalling with hilarity for fifteen years (off and on, admittedly) a sequence of Christmas cards which recounts the history of two families as names add to, drop from, or swap between the list of addressees and the list of signatories, starting with a modest "Bernard with all good wishes from Charles" and eventually reaching "Charles, Jean, Flora, Polly, Daisy, James, Dinah, Gareth, Luke, Lionel, Georgina, Lester, Linda, Sulle and Jane from . . ." another dozen names, with poor Bernard now well down the list and half the world away. I've just realized that the technique here is exactly that of the immortal cabin sequence in *A Night at the Opera*, when a hundred assorted seafarers successively cram into a tiny stateroom. (If Frayn sometimes has difficulty with endings, this is because this side of heaven, even the best of farces cannot end with a terminally wonderful climax: it can only de-tumescence when the audience and cast can't take verbal felicities of these early writings, one hears, like a distant music, the cupboard doors opening and closing, and opening and closing, and opening.

Frane's approach is unashamedly that of the secular buildings of the entire Anglo-Saxon period, and they are thus separated from the consideration of ecclesiastical buildings. The reason for this lies no doubt in the author's admission that he is not a specialist in timber buildings and is only summarizing the work of others. But the result is sometimes an unfortunate disjunction between secular and ecclesiastical buildings which should illuminate each other as parts of a single cultural phenomenon. Two chapters are then devoted to ecclesiastical architecture of the sixth to ninth centuries, and these present a balanced picture of the main buildings surviving from at least the earlier part of this period.

The heart of the book's interest, however, undoubtedly lies in its second half, which deals with churches from the time of Alfred the Great to the Norman Conquest. Here Frane is very much arguing a particular line: that Late

Settling on a site

Robin Cormack

RICHARD KRAUTHEIMER
Three Christian Capitals: Topography and Politics
Upp. University of California Press. \$27.50.
0520045416

Three Christian Capitals was written as four lectures (now revised and enlarged), which were delivered in the University of California at Berkeley in May 1979. The text still shows all the virtues and vices of the lecture form—it is lively and provocative on the one side, but dogmatic and cavalier with evidence and rival scholarly opinions on the other. The lectures must have been great fun to attend, but under close reading the difficulties in the argument cannot be disguised.

Richard Krautheimer has made a great contribution to the development of art history through his researches and through his teaching at New York University, and one of his major enterprises has been the coordination of the architectural study of the main churches of Rome—whose results have been published, in a series of volumes of the highest standards, as the *Corpus Basilicarum Christianarum Romae* (Vatican, 1937–77). He defines himself in the present book as "an old historian of art exploring the borders of his field and transgressing into that of political history" and as if to underline this description the Library of Congress publication information at the front of the book records his date of birth, 1897.

The lectures were developed around a question which had worried Krautheimer as an art historian studying Early Christian Rome, and which he formulates like this: why was the original Cathedral church of Rome, now known under the name of S Giovanni in Laterano, sited not in the centre of the city but in the outskirts, near the Aurelian walls? In answering this question and developing its implications, Krautheimer aims to influence the work of both historians and art historians. He wants to persuade his readers that barriers between the disciplines are artificial, and the material offered important primary historical evidence. He has chosen a good example to make his case.

Each of the four lectures is concerned with the reasons which determined the location of the major fourth and early fifth-century churches of three cities—Rome, Constantinople and Milan. Krautheimer views this as the period when these cities developed into

Creeping towards Romanesque

Richard Gem

ERIC FERNIE
The Architecture of the Anglo-Saxons
Upp. Batsford. £20.
0704 15277

It is over fifty years since the last attempt to present a brief but scholarly conspectus of Anglo-Saxon architecture. Eric Fernie's *The Architecture of the Anglo-Saxons* thus fills an immediate need and, within its aims, fills it well.

Fernie's approach is unashamedly that of the secular buildings of the entire Anglo-Saxon period, and they are thus separated from the consideration of ecclesiastical buildings. The reason for this lies no doubt in the author's admission that he is not a specialist in timber buildings and is only summarizing the work of others. But the result is sometimes an unfortunate disjunction between secular and ecclesiastical buildings which should illuminate each other as parts of a single cultural phenomenon. Two chapters are then devoted to ecclesiastical architecture of the sixth to ninth centuries, and these present a balanced picture of the main buildings surviving from at least the earlier part of this period.

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"Christian Capitals", although his discussion does not help one to appreciate the precise meaning of the term, a "Christian city". It seems odd to have omitted from examination the cities of Jerusalem and Ravenna, the evidence from which seems more integral to his needs than the case of Trier which, according to his introduction, Krautheimer had originally hoped to include. As it is, he has singled out for consideration specific monuments with whose study he has been personally concerned over his professional career.

The first lecture considers the role of Constantine the Great in the foundation and location of the Lateran Basilica. Krautheimer believes that the decision to build this cathedral for the bishop of Rome was a personal one made by Constantine only days after his victory over his rival Maxentius at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge on October 28, 312. He used imperial properties and demolished a military barracks to provide a site. What amazes Krautheimer looking back at the decision is the distance of the church from the centre of Rome, with its concomitant inconvenience for regular attendance by the Christian community. The location of the church had repercussions well beyond the time of Constantine, and Krautheimer discusses some of these in the fourth lecture, which deals with the siting of churches during the following century. For the siting of the Lateran, Krautheimer offers a kind of political explanation: that Constantine, despite personal convictions in favour of Christianity, was too conciliatory a statesman to offend the powerful pagan aristocracy. Thus Krautheimer's method is to use architectural evidence to reach conclusions about the personal motivations of Constantine and other patrons of the period. Such a use faces formidable theoretical objections. Statements about the private religious feelings of Constantine are open to criticism, as is the unjustified polarization which is assumed here between an innovative Christianity and a conservative paganism.

Krautheimer's method does not allow him to set out any framework for alternative explanations, nor to explain the nature and the limitations of the evidence for the period in question, nor to explore other, more testable, historical factors such as the physical benefits of choosing a site near the walls, economic considerations, the fact that a private residence was available for the bishop on the site, the nature of other sites available to Constantine in different parts of the city, the associations of this particular site, and so on.

The same methodological issues arise with

the book's second chapter too, but here difficulties of historical accuracy are involved as well. Its subject is the foundation of Constantinople on the site of Byzantium, and Krautheimer suggests that the nature and the prominent locations of the new churches point to certain conclusions about the development of the Christian convictions of Constantine himself between 312 and the 320s and 330s. As emperor he now saw himself as the regent of Christ on earth.

In this chapter art history becomes an even blunter instrument of analysis. A key role is played by the church of St Sophia, though the fact is there are great uncertainties about the date and form of the first church of this name to be built on the site now occupied by the sixth-century building of the emperor Justinian. Krautheimer relies on a circular argument about architectural sources and influences, from which he concludes that St Sophia was already planned by Constantine in 326 (very early on in the planning of the city, which was only formally founded in 330). The consecration came much later, in 360, in the reign of Constantius II, who became emperor on the death of Constantine in 337. The dating of the church proposed in this book requires much more careful consideration, and Krautheimer has not answered the objections to it which were set out in a study to which he makes reference and which is the outstanding recent publication on the establishment of Constantinople: Gilbert Dagron's *Naissance d'une capitale: Constantinople et ses institutions de 330 à 451* (Paris, 1974).

Dagron demonstrates the difficulties of connecting Constantine with the building of St Sophia, and so casts doubt on Krautheimer's arguments; he also offers an alternative hypothesis. He sets out the evidence for believing that Constantine built an episcopal cathedral on the prominent site adjacent to that used for St Sophia (like the palace, this was on the acropolis of the pre-Constantinian city). The cathedral was dedicated to St Eirene. One may ask, therefore, whether Krautheimer's ideas about the siting of St Sophia can be redeemed if they are simply reapplied to St Eirene. The answer must be that, as in the case of the Lateran, there are far more considerations than Krautheimer has taken into account. The site on which St Eirene was built was, according to an early text, previously occupied by a church; this seems entirely likely, since many churches must have been put up in Roman cities after 312. Constantine's choice of this site may have been for no better reason than to provide a continuity with the pre-existing

arrangements of the Christian community. Rather than pursue such issues further here (and the chapter on Milan raises several more problems), the larger debate raised by the book must be faced. How can the evidence of architectural topography be used in historical studies? Clearly it has been under-exploited in the past. In his book on Constantinople, Dagron had already asked himself how he should handle the evidence of the monuments built there by Constantine. He describes his method as being to look not for "the religion of Constantine", but for "the form his religion took at Constantinople". This shift to a structural approach is one of the strengths of Dagron's work, and it is easy to see how the issues raised by Krautheimer can be reformulated along the same lines. We might speak, for example, of the effects, both practical and ideological, of the siting of the Lateran Basilica in Rome, or try to characterize the overall effect of the city-plans and buildings of the reign of Constantine and of his successors. It is better to ask how Constantine used Christianity than to attempt to measure his own Christian convictions.

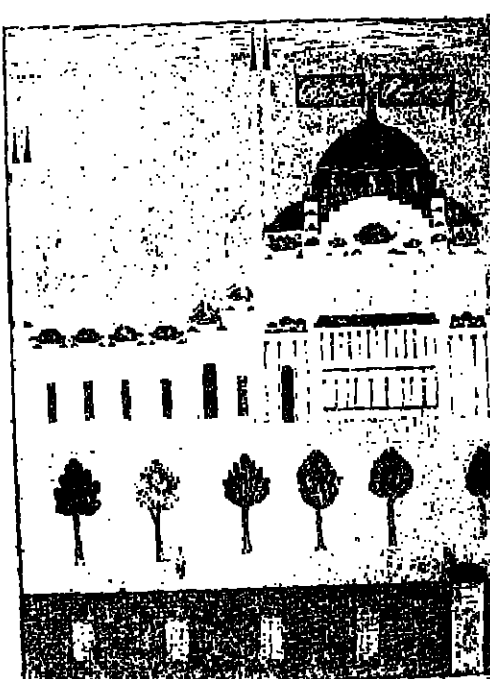
divide the Anglo-Saxon period into three. There is an early, pagan period represented here only briefly by a selection of secular buildings. Then there is the Christian period, which, Fernie maintains, was sharply separated into two parts by the Viking invasions of the ninth century. The idea of this division is not a new one, but its reappearance here largely ignores the quantity of research in recent years into the significance or otherwise of the Vikings as an interruption in Anglo-Saxon culture. A good case can be made for seeing the ninth century as a period of greater cultural continuity than Fernie allows.

The early chapters of the book deal with the secular buildings of the entire Anglo-Saxon period, and they are thus separated from the consideration of ecclesiastical buildings. The reason for this lies no doubt in the author's admission that he is not a specialist in timber buildings and is only summarizing the work of others. But the result is sometimes an unfortunate disjunction between secular and ecclesiastical buildings which should illuminate each other as parts of a single cultural phenomenon. Two chapters are then devoted to ecclesiastical architecture of the sixth to ninth centuries, and these present a balanced picture of the main buildings surviving from at least the earlier part of this period.

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Anglo-Saxon architecture is to be understood against the background of the developing Romanesque style of the Continent. With this argument I have some sympathy since the relationship of Anglo-Saxon architecture to Continental Romanesque is a problem of critical importance: however, I cannot help feeling that Fernie has stated the problem in a way that will trap the unwary. There are, in the first place, substantial objections to the way he defines the term "Romanesque" and, flowing from this, to the chronological context to which he applies it.

He sees the Romanesque style as being principally a matter of order and clarity in composing the main architectural volumes of buildings, though he agrees that the distinctive articulation of the surface of the masonry with plastic elements such as the half-column is also important. I believe that both these elements are equally essential and that it is meaningless to talk about Romanesque in the absence of either: in other words, that there is no Romanesque style in architecture before the early eleventh century. Fernie, however, in giving primacy of importance to architectural order and clarity is able to interpret the Carolingian and Ottonian styles of the eighth to tenth centuries as part of a continuous linear progression towards Romanesque. But to do this is to underestimate the extent to which Carolingian and Ottonian architecture had programmes of their own, distinct and sometimes divergent from the later programme of Romanesque (a parallel is the distinctiveness



The mosque of Süleymaniye in Istanbul, from the Süleymaniye—a depiction of a model, of gift and decorated paper over a wooden skeleton, which would have been made to aid the builders. The illustration is taken from MS413 in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, and is reproduced here from Islamic Art and Design 1500–1700 by J. M. Rogers (167pp. British Museum Publications. £7.95. 07141 14286).

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of the programme of the High Renaissance or Mannerism against that of the Baroque). The implication of this for the scheme of the present book is that, whereas it is indeed relevant to analyse eleventh-century architecture in England in relation to Continental Romanesque, it is meaningless to do the same for the tenth century, or to look for a supposed internal Anglo-Saxon development towards Romanesque in the earlier century.

These general points lead on to a particular one: in seeking to define an Anglo-Saxon Romanesque style Fernie does not always indicate the real uncertainty of date that surrounds many of the buildings which may be termed *sensu stricto* Romanesque. The truth is that we know only one certainly pre-Conquest building that was Romanesque (Westminster Abbey), and one or two others (for example Stow) that might be called Romanesque only with qualification. For the bulk of the buildings that combine Romanesque stylistic features with Anglo-Saxon constructional techniques, however, a date as late as the 1090s is on present evidence more likely than one in the 1060s. What is required to tip the balance towards an early date is evidence (so far lacking) for the appearance of these features in major, dated buildings, and not in largely undatable, parochial ones.

These points of dispute having been stated, however, Fernie is to be congratulated warmly on seeking to bring the debate about Anglo-Saxon architecture back on to art-historical ground.

JP 11/10/84

Indicted for aggression

Wolfgang Mommsen

ROBERT E. CONOT
Justice At Nuremberg: The first
comprehensive account of the trial of the Nazi
leaders
593pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £15.
0297783602
ANN and JOHN TUSA
The Nuremberg Trial
519pp. Macmillan. £12.95.
0333274636

The International Tribunal at Nuremberg was convened in order to expose the evil character of National Socialism to the world in such a way as to eradicate National Socialist ideas from the minds of the people once and for all. The trial was the idea of American jurists and politicians, who wanted a public indictment of National Socialism and its deeds by means of the legal procedures which were part of the democratic traditions of the West; they did not want simply retribution, let alone revenge. At the same time they hoped to see the established standards of international law made permanently binding through their implementation against the representatives of a dictatorship who had flagrantly violated all the principles of international law and humanity; furthermore, they also wanted to indict the institutions which had been the backbone of this system. Above all, aggressive war should be seen as a crime against humanity and as a massive offence against international law.

Initially the other great powers were reluctant to embark upon such a grandiose undertaking, as they thought that an international tribunal might provide a platform for National Socialist propaganda; the British would have preferred to have the leading figures shot without any further ado. In the end the Americans carried the day. The difficulties, though, were indeed great, beginning with the sheer physical problem of arranging such a tribunal in a devastated country where even basic communication facilities were lacking. The almost insoluble problem of agreeing a common legal basis for a trial of this magnitude among the four great powers which would circumvent as far as possible the obvious charge of being retroactively legal was eventually solved. Less satisfactory was the fact that most of the central figures of National Socialism, Hitler, Himmler and Goebbels, had committed suicide at the end of the war, while Bormann was believed to be dead. Hence the representatives to be charged at Nuremberg had to be selected somewhat at random and with the exception of Goering, Frank and perhaps Sauckel and Speer,

they could not really be considered as having been at the very centre of affairs in the Third Reich.

This was, however, of little importance. It was not the persons in high office, but the political system and its main supporting institutions which were to be tried and their guilt exposed. Thus, the controversial decision was made to put on trial the main institutional bodies of National Socialist Germany, such as the SS, the SA, the General Staff, the Reich Cabinet, the Leadership Corps of the NSDAP and, last but not least, the industrialists, contrary to all previous usage in international and indeed national law. For this purpose the Tribunal collected, sifted and eventually made public a gigantic number of official and other documents of National Socialist policies, using oral testimony only as a supplementary source for its findings.

It is generally accepted nowadays (though perhaps not in all quarters) that given the climate of public opinion in 1945 and 1946 the trial was a fair one; the defence was surely less restricted in its operations than might have been expected. Whether the findings of the Tribunal can be considered just is another matter; not only would we now object in principle to having the death penalty implemented, but it is open to question whether the representatives of what was suspected to be German militarism, namely Jodi and Raeder, were not treated too harshly, whilst others, such as Speer and von Papen, were let off rather lightly.

In the light of subsequent experience it is also doubtful whether the Tribunal succeeded in confirming that waging aggressive war was a punishable crime under international law. The Tribunal considered it one of its prime duties to "provide an authoritative and impartial record to which future historians might turn for truth and future politicians for warning", as the British chief prosecutor, Sir Hartley Shawcross, put it in his opening speech. Perhaps this was too exalted an aim, although the prosecutors, judges and, to a more modest degree, the defence lawyers certainly went some way towards it.

Now that almost forty years have elapsed and passions have given way to a more considered response, new assessments of the Nuremberg Trial, such as these by Robert E. Conot and Ann and John Tusa, are to be welcomed. The two books are very different in their approach. *Justice at Nuremberg* offers a colourful and lively account of the actions and thoughts of the personalities involved, in particular the intellectual father of the trial, Murray C. Bernays, the prosecution, the judges

and the defence lawyers. However, a prominent place is given to the analysis of the conduct and personalities of the defendants, whose interrogations and declarations in court are reproduced at length. In order to demonstrate the validity of the prosecution's claims, and indeed the justification of the trial as a whole, Conot devotes considerable space to the historical background to the charges. He looks into the individual careers of the defendants under National Socialism, but also reassesses the crimes and atrocities committed by the régime, culminating in genocide; the Holocaust is seen as the logical conclusion to it all.

In a way, Conot's book provides a history of National Socialism *in nuce*. He regrets that the prosecution failed "to demonstrate the interaction of the dynamic forces in the Third Reich" and to lay bare in each individual instance, the "standard chain of command" by which the deeds of the main culprits were interconnected. But this is to fall into the very trap which the prosecution created for itself by claiming that National Socialist policies, including the innumerable crimes against humanity, were part of a grand "conspiracy" by the party elite and their fellow-travellers in big business and in the Officer Corps. In fact the charge of "conspiracy" was difficult to sustain even at the time (as is borne out by Ann and John Tusa's careful analysis of the legal background to the trial; the judges were certainly never happy with it). The too simple interpretation of National Socialism as a monolithic system, which served as a guideline for the prosecution's case, was strongly influenced by the then current notions of the theory of totalitarianism, which are now strongly challenged by many scholars. The notion, first put forward by Bernays and maintained by the American chief prosecutor Colonel Jackson, that all the defendants had operated according to a common plan can no longer be sustained in the light of modern research. Conot, it is clear, is unfamiliar with this, despite his references to a few recent works, and clings, therefore, to ideas long since corrected. He argues, for instance, that the Nuremberg Laws "merely egged on" party officials to continue their persecution of the Jews, although it is now clear that these laws were designed to put an end to the "wild" pogroms against the Jews - which were widely unpopular - by shifting antisemitic policies on to the bureaucratic plane. Conot's book is interesting inasmuch as it reconstructs, almost unintentionally, the perceptions of contemporaries as to the nature of the National Socialist régime. While his account of what happened may still be acceptable, it cannot be recommended as a guide to why it happened.

Ann and John Tusa's presentation is more sophisticated. Their main interest, however, is not in demonstrating yet again the evil character of the National Socialist system and, consequently, the "justice" of the verdicts reached at Nuremberg, but in looking at the Nuremberg proceedings as a major attempt to practise existing and to establish new international law. Their account of the background to the trial, of the proceedings and in particular of the legal battles which the prosecution, the defence and especially the judges fought behind the scenes is well researched and presented, tightly argued and balanced in its judgments. They establish that both the prosecution and the judges did their best to make the trial a fair one; indeed they succeeded in preventing it from being seen merely as a show trial, with the outcome obvious from the start.

The Tusas demonstrate that, mainly for legal reasons, the judges cut down the case of the prosecution considerably, making it less of a trial against the National Socialist dictatorship as such, as the prosecution had initially conceived it to be. They discuss at length and with remarkable circumspection the considerable legal problems involved and show that the judges were fully aware that the trial was treading on thin ice by indicting various National Socialist institutions. They emphasize the grand design of the trial, namely to lay the legal foundations for a new international order, rather than merely to prosecute the National Socialist leadership, and point out why it failed to achieve this lofty goal.

For all those interested in international law this book is essential reading. With hindsight the shortcomings of the trial are being assessed more appropriately; even at the time the charges against German militarism, represented by Jodi, Keitel, Raeder and Dönitz, turned out to be less than fully convincing, whilst those against the industrialists collapsed almost at the start. However, as an attempt to prove to the German people and to world opinion the true nature of National Socialism the Nuremberg Trial was undoubtedly successful. But as an "authoritative" and "impartial" account of what actually had happened, it left much to be desired. All the same, the abundant evidence on the evil character of the National Socialist régime and its almost unbelievable crimes, helped to pave the way for the rise of a new democratic order, at least in West Germany, even though it failed to open up a new world order of peace, justice and prosperity as was so fervently hoped by Lieutenant-Colonel Bernays and Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson, and indeed by all the learned lawyers assembled at Nuremberg.

the content and effect of its ideological training programmes, and the record and character of its fighting units and leading personalities, Wegner is able to draw conclusions which add significantly to a sharper image of what the Waffen SS was and how it served the larger purposes of Nazi Germany.

Wegner argues persuasively that the Waffen SS reflected a tendency endemic in the development of industrial European societies during the interwar period - the creation of political para-military formations by parties determined to subvert public disposition for curbing military power and status. He contends that, as the concept of the Waffen SS evolved in the 1930s, these political soldiers became less and less associated with traditional and national statist philosophy, and progressively identified with both National Socialist ideology and with the Nazi movement. As a result, when war began in 1939 (and the Waffen SS came into official being shortly thereafter) it existed, not to serve and protect the citizens and the interests of a nation, but to advance the revolutionary objectives of a supra-national racial community. In this sense, the Waffen SS, as the symbolic surrogate for the entire SS, came to be used by Hitler, Himmler, Heydrich, etc. as both the image and the instrument for the establishment of a racial and ideological superiority that would become the basis of a new Nazi millennium.

The Waffen SS, like the SS itself, was a

phenomenon of contradictions and conflicts. The fundamental inconsistencies between its elitist image and its racist East European "sub-humans" to serve in the armed SS for the security and preservation of the master race, and the virtually unbridgeable gulf between SS ideological orthodoxy and wartime political reality - these, according to Wegner, were basic conflicts enclosed by a consensus. That consensus was constantly reinforced by the indivisible political links to National Socialist ideology and to the Hitlerian system of rule and domination, and consistently intensified by the accelerating tempo of wartime demands. The conflicts were not resolved, because they did not have to be; the history of the Waffen SS was too brief and the magnitude of its tasks too great. The resolution of all the internal and structural contradictions would only have come if the war had ended in German victory, and Himmler had been able to proceed with his long-nurtured ambition to have the SS, but pre-eminently the Waffen SS, serve as the dominant institution securing and ruling the conquered regions that would have supported the Thousand Year Reich.

In short, contradictions and internal conflicts notwithstanding, the armed SS served its masters and performed its missions exceedingly well - never allowing differences in approach, or dispute over jurisdiction and prerogative, to impair its commitment to discharge faithfully its mandate of destruction.

Credos and credits

A. H. Halsey

JOHN BOWKER
Worlds of Faith: Religious Belief and Practice
in Britain Today
312pp. BBC Publications. £3.95.
0953201975

The subtitle of *Worlds of Faith* is inviting. A book on "religious belief and practice in Britain today" will surely tell us which of the two opposed views about religion is to be accepted. Both views are plausible: the one that religion is moribund, the other that it is reborn. And both views have their evidence.

The first view is obvious. The "fixed capital" of Christendom - the spires and steeples of parish churches - is a ubiquitous feature of an ancient landscape. Yet on Sunday only three per cent of Britons will enter and they will be mostly old women. The safe inference therefore is that Christianity is dead. Many modern intellectuals concur and deem themselves progressive in doing so. Religion, they affirm, along with ritual and magical belief, was doomed from the dawn of the scientific age. Religious explanations of life and death are the residual remains of past, primitive, ignorant and gullible peoples. Robert Currie in his *Church and Church-Goers* (1977) has compiled the arithmetic of decline since 1700. The desertion of the pews, especially in the state churches like the Church of England or the Lutheran Church in Sweden, may be slow, but, in the time span of two millennia of the Christendom, is spectacular. Secularization, though lauded sociologists dispute its meaning, defines the long post-medieval cycle of human consciousness.

The second view can be taken from Coveney on Whit Sunday, 1982. "No popery" has been the common religion of the British people since Henry VIII. Yet here an elegant layman waited the Vicar of Rome out of a clear blue sky on a vast open-air church to preside over the Eucharist before a congrega-

tion of nearly half a million. A Catholic mass rode joyfully on an oceanic tide of belief, in *Veni, Veni, Sancte Spiritus*. The religious impulse is indestructible. He who attempts to assassinate the Pope attracts more attention from the mass media than does he who tries to kill the President of the United States. Mrs Thatcher entered 10 Downing Street in May 1979 quoting St Francis of Assisi. The Gallup polls tell us that Britons accept the Ten Commandments more readily than the French or the Italians. With appropriate discount for the British tradition of polite hypocrisy before doorstep interviewers, the evidence of tenacity in religious belief, albeit unchurched, constantly renews the promise of religious revival.

One reads John Bowker's book in anticipation of a definitive opinion based on new evidence. It is not there. Of course a subtle and erudite analysis of churches, denominations, sects, confessions, liturgies and rites is not to be expected from popular radio. But this compilation of talk into text is offered as an empirical study. The author and his BBC team accumulated 300 hours of taped interviews with declared religious devotees who were not priests or theologians or anthropologists of religion but ordinary practising members of their faith. And a neatly sequenced selection from the material constitutes the book by the simple method of copy typing. Why, then, is it unsatisfactory?

There are two reasons: no numbers and no history. The result is a woefully inadequate ethnography and indeed a misrepresentation of "religious belief and practice in Britain today". The arithmetic fault is intrinsic to Bowker's method. He deliberately rules out the lapsed and unbelieving; he seeks those who are committed to religions which have established themselves in Britain; he finds six kinds - Jews, Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and Sikhs - and proceeds to catalogue what they think and do. His sketch of a multicultural society is so rigorously even-handed with respect to its religious categories as to convey the impression, not of a Christian society

secularized, but of a territory shared equally between six religious faiths. It is the absurd caricature of religious impartiality. The innocent reader receives no hint that Catholics, let alone Christians, outnumber all the other five faiths put together by at least two to one, and that the majority belong to no church at all. Nor is there the slightest inkling that the existence of the ethnic minorities of Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists and Muslims in Britain is itself a facet of the imperial history of Christianity.

None of this essential historical context appears from Professor Bowker's angle of vision. Nor is there an answer to my anticipated question. For a moment in the last pages he appears to offer one: "religions are not going to disappear". But that answer cannot be inferred from recordings of the sayings of the uncounted faithful. He simply assumes that religions will not disappear because "they matter far too much to those who believe". Sceptics will demand more persuasive evidence, including at least the measurement of historical trends. Instead they have to be content with an altered question - the paradox that "precisely because religions do matter so much, because they are more important to believers than anything else, they are going to go on fuelling the fires of passion and violence which divide us". Thus the aim of the book is to raise the question not of decline and fall but of ecumenicism.

Of course fission and fusion among believers are a serious question. It preoccupies a divided Christendom and in Britain is further complicated by the now permanently established minorities who have brought their exotic faiths from continents previously under British domination. We learn how religious people think and feel about body and soul, heaven and hell, evil and suffering. The Christian Trinity, the Sikhs' Four Vows and the Buddhists' Five Precepts are defined. Karma, dharma, moksha and sannyasin are explained. From this catalogue of belief and practice it emerges that the six faiths have many features in common - the centrality of prayer to religious practice, the significance of individual life as a balance of

virtue and vice determining a fate beyond death, the insignificance of individual life in the pages of eternity, the rootedness of religious belief in family continuity and - for most - the ultimate belief in one God. And this last seems capable of translation into a common ethical creed of love, hope and charity binding a nation and extending towards all mankind, even all creation.

Bowker applauds the hope and claims to find in his tapes "a kind of practical and instinctive ecumenicism at work". At the same time he also recognizes that there are fundamentally serious issues of truth and salvation between religions. He begins his book with the observation that religions in history have propelled people to hatred and killing and he ends it with the fear that religions will not repent in time to mobilize their immense potential power to prevent holocaust. Moreover his fears outweigh his hopes and he offers no way of tilting the balance except that the major religions should co-operate in writing "something as formal and deliberate as the Brandt Report" to analyse the divisions between themselves and to strengthen their connections in resistance to the disasters that threaten the earth.

One has no need to quarrel with such an amiable suggestion to find it an unconvincing solution. Nor would I argue that Bowker's conclusion is inconsistent with the interview material he presents. Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Sikhism do share a longing for peace and they also differ as to how they might realize it. My dissatisfaction remains because I think that convincing proposals for social accord would have to be based on a much wider analysis of secular as well as religious sources of cohesion and conflict. Even as an ethnography of contemporary British religious belief and practice, Professor Bowker's contribution is limited and lacking in balance. His descriptions and suggestions are manifestly well-intentioned. But on putting down the book I could not resist the conviction that I had been reading the work of a friendly and sentimental atheist.

Charged with destruction

Charles W. Sydnor

BERND WEGNER
Hitlers Politische Soldaten: Die Waffen-SS
1933-1945
363pp. Paderborn: Schöningh.
3306 774603

Hitlerian studies, in the broadest sense, can be divided into those that deal with who Adolf Hitler was, what he did, and why he did it; and those that concern themselves with how and by what means he was able to do what he did. It is to the latter category that this original and powerful new book belongs.

For a generation, influential studies in both categories have recognized directly or indirectly that the most significant institution upon which the structure of National Socialist ideology was built, and the most effective instrument by which the goals of the National Socialist policy were achieved, was the SS. From its modest beginnings as Hitler's personal bodyguard in the mid-1920s, the SS grew, as the Third Reich evolved, into a vast conglomerate of Nazi agencies involved in virtually every conceivable area of activity affected by the racial and ideological obsessions that propelled the Führer state. From the control of the police and terror apparatus, to the development of the concentration camp system, to the construction of the extermination complexes of

the wartime occupied East, to the management of a vast industrial empire built on slave labour, to the conduct of military operations and the waging of war, the SS, as one of its earliest theoreticians described it, "served as the executive instrument of the Führer's will".

The earliest literature devoted to it, the tendentious memoirs and nostalgic histories written by senior SS generals and Waffen SS veterans in the 1930s and early 1960s, sought to establish an image of the Waffen SS as a military organization, little different from the rest of the SS, that was not involved in any of the unfortunate and unpleasant events that transpired in the death camps, and that ignored Himmler's orders and directives whenever possible, or only obeyed them with grudging contempt whenever absolutely necessary. The resulting mythology about the Waffen SS - which was so important to the political campaign of its veterans' organization for rehabilitation and the right to pension benefits and respectability in West Germany - was not effectively challenged until the appearance in 1966 of George H. Stein's *The Waffen SS: Hitler's Elite Guard at War, 1933-1945*. Bernd Wegner both enlarges upon and completes this pioneering work.

Hitlers Politische Soldaten is an exhaustively researched, tightly reasoned study that does full justice to its subject. By detailing the antecedents of the Waffen SS, the social and economic background of its officers and men, the evolution of its agencies and institutions,

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Beyond the monastery walls

Gordon Leff

H. E. J. COWDREY

The Age of Abbot Desiderius: Montecassino, the papacy, and the Normans in the eleventh and early twelfth centuries 300pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £22.50. 0194219393

JOHN H. VAN ENGLEN

Rupert of Deutz 397pp. University of California Press. £29.50. 0520045777

Between about 1050 and 1120 religion and learning took a new direction, away from the monasteries into the world. And improbably, some of the main agents in that change were Benedictine monks. They provided the main religious and intellectual personalities, including some of the most prominent reforming popes, who between them helped to reinvigorate the Church and the papacy and extend learning and speculative thought. By the second and third decades of the twelfth century those activities were passing into new hands, drawn from new monastic and religious movements, the secular Church and the urban and cathedral schools, whose products of professional teachers, canonists and theologians came to dominate both the Church and intellectual life by the end of the century.

These two books deal with different aspects of that culminating phase of monastic influence: H. E. J. Cowdrey's with the contribution of the abbey of Montecassino to religious reform in the eleventh and early twelfth centuries, and John H. Van Englen's with the somewhat anomalous figure of Rupert of Deutz, living each side of 1100.

Cowdrey's book complements his earlier study over a decade ago of Cluny and the Gregorian reform. It is a masterful synthesis which now places that same reform in its south Italian setting. It thereby provides a much-needed corrective to the prevailing, predominantly northern, perspective, as seen from Cluny and the Lotharingian monasteries. But his book is also—at least in English—the first integrated account of religious developments in south Italy, having Montecassino, the papacy and the Normans as their foci. We are in effect given three studies for the price of one. In a book that is remarkable for its range and command, there will be few readers who will not come from it enriched.

Although its centre-piece is Montecassino under the near thirty-year reign of its abbot Desiderius, from 1058 to 1087, when it reached its zenith, it was the Normans who played the crucial role in the religious as well as the political developments of south Italy in the eleventh century. Relations with them formed the thread of both papal and Montecassino policy. The inescapable fact which they each had to face was that of Norman existence which, from small beginnings early in the century, before either the existence of the reformed papacy or the revival of Montecassino, had become the dominant political and military force by the time of both. It could be either combated or accepted but not ignored. The papacy oscillated between both courses with little success from either. When it tried to combat the Normans under Leo IX, the first reforming pope, it was defeated at Civitate in 1053. When it entered into alliance with them, as it did under Nicholas II and Alexander II, the Normans put their own interests first, to the point of harming those of the papacy. And when they did meet in common hostility to the German king, Henry IV, and the Normans came to the rescue of Gregory VII at Rome in 1084, they married the effect by burning and sacking the city which Gregory feared to stay and left with them.

It was quite otherwise with Desiderius. He followed the example of his predecessor in recognizing the need for friendship with the Normans and to have them as Montecassino's protectors; he never wavered from that policy. The result was autonomy, integrity of lands and ever-growing wealth and possessions; in no small measure from the munificence of the leader of the Normans, Robert Guiscard, Duke of Apulia and Calabria, and his second wife, but also from other local rulers. Cowdrey shows convincingly how, in the twelfth century, the

Montecassino's relations with the papacy fluctuated according to papal relations with the Normans. When they were good, as they were under Nicholas II and Alexander II, relations between Montecassino and the papacy were close; when they were bad, as they were during the first part of Gregory VII's pontificate in the early and middle 1070s, relations with Montecassino were distant. They became and stayed close after Gregory and Guiscard came together in 1080.

But if the Normans were brutal, inconstant, aggressive and unappeasably acquisitive, they were also devout, with the same lack of constraint in their religious building and benefactions as they showed in their territorial ambitions. That devoutness extended to the popes: they could pillage ecclesiastical lands and waylay prelates but they treated both Leo IX, after their defeat of him in 1053, and Gregory VII, after freeing him in Rome in 1084, with honour and respect, contrary to the widespread myth that both died humiliated. The Norman rescue of Gregory was just that: far from spending his last days at Salerno, to which Guiscard escorted him, in near captivity, he continued his papal activities unabated, holding a council at Salerno and pursuing his policies against Henry IV. He also performed the ceremony of consecrating Guiscard's magnificent new cathedral at Salerno. His death in 1085 was hardly that of a broken man. What, from the northern side of the Alps, seems anomalous or dramatic, viewed from close-up becomes more readily assimilable, especially over the relations between the papacy and the Normans, which were no less crucial to the papacy than those with the German kings.

They also had a direct bearing upon its relations with Montecassino. Compared with Cluny, the nearest in influence and prestige to its counterpart in southern Europe, Montecassino, its independence assured by its alliance with the Normans, needed the papacy much less than the papacy, exposed to the threat of attack from both the Normans and the German kings, and lacking the consolidated territories which Montecassino enjoyed, needed Montecassino. And that help, never of much account materially, tended to be withheld in terms of support and co-operation when it might threaten Montecassino's friendship with the Normans. Otherwise it took the form of participation of Montecassino

nan monks in papal affairs. Desiderius himself became a cardinal and later, for the last four months of his life, Gregory VII's delayed successor as Pope Victor III, who followed the same reforming policies. He was one of three reforming popes who came from Montecassino during this period, a measure of Montecassino's influence.

But Montecassino was a very different kind of religious community from Cluny and the reformed Benedictine houses of Lotharingia. Like the latter it was not the head of a new congregation, nor did it ever evince such aspirations. Its ambience was that of traditional Benedictinism and its models came from nearer or before Benedict's own age in the early popes and Christian emperors, above all Constantine. It subscribed completely to the new reforming ideals of a celibate clergy free from the taint of simony, but without making any of the liturgical or other innovations of northern monasticism. It also tended, from the writings of its members, including Desiderius, to combine religious conservatism with spiritual restraint: there was none of Cluny's moral fervour, especially in Desiderius, who acted more as statesman than as a monk, building a great basilica whose consecration in 1071 Cowdrey describes as one of the southern Italian religious events of the eleventh century, consolidating and extending its lands and gaining access to the sea.

Nevertheless, Montecassino had a strong influence on the south Italian Church in helping to foster local saints, as well as co-operating with rulers like Guiscard in the rebuilding of Salerno cathedral. It was also the pre-eminent centre of culture in the eleventh century, the home of the first medical translations from Arabic sources and of rhetoric, as well as of important early collections of canon law. As depicted in all its nuances by Cowdrey, it represents a different reforming tradition which originated and existed independently of either Cluny or the papacy, but yet was equally formative in the new religious developments. And in its heyday until the 1120s it remained one of the bastions of both popes and reformers.

Van Englen's study of Rupert of Deutz, who lived from 1075 to 1129, moves to the other end of the monastic spectrum in Belgium and, for the last nine years of his life, Germany. It also catches the transition from a monastic intellec-

tual world to that of the new cathedral schools and masters. Rupert had the discomfort to be between both. His formation and entire life were those of a monk; and so were his attitudes. In a more quiescent age he would probably have been less involved in controversy. As it was he came to consciousness at a time of reviving intellectual activity, stimulated by the rediscovered use of dialectic in Aristotle's logic to solve the puzzles of Christian theology. The result was a renewal of old controversies over the Eucharist, predestination and the Incarnation. Rupert was drawn into one after the other, each time in reaction to the excesses, indeed to him blasphemies, which came from the doctrines being taught in the new schools, especially at Laon, as well as by individual masters.

But Rupert was not simply an old-fashioned monk who rejected all innovation. As the result of a mystical experience when he was over thirty, he learned that his appointed task was the interpretation of scripture. And for the remaining twenty years of his life he dedicated himself to its exposition, writing work after work to give expression to the spiritual understanding which had been revealed to him. He saw the Bible as the manifestation of God through his work of salvation; its understanding therefore enabled men to grasp God through his works, as the nearest they could get to him. That notion of salvation history as the key to all understanding, and its events as representations of God, has led to Rupert's being classified as one of the new scriptural symbolists who belong to the tradition from which, later, Joachim of Fiore derived.

Van Englen shows that Rupert defies any ready classification. The notion of salvation history is certainly a recurrent theme but the sheer magnitude of his writings and his singular attitudes, and not least his constant departures from Augustine's position, put him into a category of his own. Van Englen makes no excessive claims for Rupert's intellectual powers, but he does full justice to them, as he works his way from one writing to the next. To have done so with such clarity and lightness of touch, moreover, is a considerable achievement. Short of undergoing a similar test of intellectual endurance, the enquirer into Rupert's life and outlook how has a comprehensive and nuanced exposition which at the very least should clear away misconceptions.

of his discussion (though inevitably it means that many arguments have unacknowledged precedents: for instance Mehl makes exactly Ramsey's point that minstrel tags are a feature of style rather than evidence of composition by a particular "minstrel", whatever that was). Each romance is taken with its chronological and thematic associates, examining the connections between the subjects of such groups and the political and social concerns of the age which produced them. Ramsey takes the ideas of W. P. Ker and R. W. Southern to a logical conclusion: "the replacement of epic by romance in the twelfth century would seem to mean that anxieties about the continued existence of the society had lessened, leaving in their place anxieties about personal rank and function". The same method is applied in the analysis of particular works: in "Edward II's reign *Horn Childe*" shows us an England fighting to maintain its integrity while constantly threatened by various factions along its borders". This political-historical method is combined when appropriate with a vulgar-Freudian scrutiny of the popular audience's demands of the stories (with excellent results in the cases that lend themselves most readily to this kind of analysis, such as the name-repetitions in *Tristram* or the theme of the Fatherless Child).

It is hard to say whether it is because of or in spite of these techniques that Ramsey's results provide the most enlightening account of the English romances yet offered. His unsentimental approach could be said to be "popular" itself, to explain its success in dealing with popular literature (though the dangers in using the term at all have been well set out by Peter Dronke and Thorlac Turville-Petre). By way of definition Ramsey says that the plot of a romance is a

myth, and that the English works pare back the peripheral accretions of idea, rhetoric and character development in their French sources to leave the myth exposed. He then divides his material into the various political myths and fantasies that the romance is concerned with in different eras, all related to notions of social status and emulation: the thirteenth-century Child Exile coming into his inheritance; the "Best Knight in the World" (in whom the conflict is "between the independent man, the one who needs no one and is needed by everyone, and the man dependant on everyone, particularly on women"); the later emergence of stories in which "Family Affairs" are the centre, and so on. This grouping is very productive; anyone who finds improbable (as I always have) the view of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* as a test of Arthur's court which finds it wanting will have their scepticism shaken by the admirable chapter on "Gentils and villains". Indeed the commonsensical demolition by Lewis and Hodgart ("In the Shade of the Golden Bough") of Spenser's mythological reading of that poem is itself made to look inadequately reductive by Ramsey's unhectored presentation of the related material and its obsessions. The method is also highly productive for some lesser romances; for instance, the unforgotten mythical-allegorical reading of *Egmont* of *Arloks* adds greatly to its weight.

This book carries lightly the amount of knowledge that underlies it. While it seems to offer the stories uninterpreted, it is in fact the most readable and accomplished guide to the English romances because of its ability to suggest the very nature of the popular romances. Ramsey's book is logically prior to many of its predecessors and is essential reading for all students of the largest medieval genre.

Copycataloguing

John Sutherland

ROBERT LEE WOLFF

Nineteenth-Century Fiction: A Bibliographical Catalogue in five volumes, II: D-K 325pp. Garland. 0824093348

Robert Lee Wolff, a Harvard professor of history, unhappily died before this record of his library could be completely published. Presumably his executors have the task in hand. Should the project lapse, it will be a loss to scholarship.

Wolff's holdings in nineteenth-century, particularly Victorian, fiction are unmatched by any other freelance collector, living or dead, with the exception of Michael Sadleir. (Sadleir's hoard is now institutionally owned.) Wolff proclaimed himself an early disciple, and eventually came to see himself not just as Sadleir's rival, but his victor, with four times as many items in his possession. Wolff's title challengingly echoes Sadleir's *XIX Century Fiction* (a two-volume work, published in 1951). On occasion, emulation seems to have driven Wolff to a pitch of recklessness. A note to Bracebridge Hemming's *Called To The Bar* (1867), runs: "bought in the summer of 1866 for £20. This seemed high to me, but I have never seen the book, and Sadleir also lacked it, and was much interested in Hemming, so I winced and bought it."

For all the parallelism of their collecting obsessions the personalities of the two men emerge differently from their libraries. Sadleir (especially in his second volume) offers more on the sociology of Victorian literary culture, particularly the cheap reprint industry that built on Colburn and Bentley's standard novels. *XIX Century Fiction* is instructive on the evolution of the English book trade and its reading public. Wolff's taste is more for interesting singularities: the one-off novel by an unknown writer with an informative inscription, a manuscript attached or an unusual

The British Library (continued)

feature of libraries, especially those committed to an archival function. When computers have become universal in homes and offices, and when they are all on efficient and cheap data networks, the functions of libraries, publishers and bookshops could be reduced and changed. A recent Cabinet Office paper (*Making a Business of Information*) points to the new technological developments, and it is symptomatic of much modern thinking that the paper highlights the economic and commercial aspects of these developments—"the tradeable information products which will be produced by the growth for institutions like the British Library to become more commercial, and already the Board is conscious of the need to increase its income and reduce its expenditure. But though, to judge from reports of recent research, handheld electronic books are no longer science fiction, it is too soon to envisage the end of the book as we know it. Even the Library's critics, anxious to reduce its claims to accommodation, have been careful not to exaggerate the early effects of electronic publishing.

It is to be hoped, too, that the new Chief Executive will be wary of those professional colleagues who are only too ready to force on to historical and literary scholarship the relatively simple information requirements of the scientist. On the other hand, the concept of the library as museum should be warmly embraced. The idea of the museum is often linked by libraries with images of evolutionary failure, like the dinosaur, as though that race of creatures had not been enormously successful and as though "museum" were a term of reproach. For, whatever else it may be, a national library must be a Museum of the Book.

What sort of person are the British Library Board looking for to succeed Sir Harry? They are not looking for Britain's "top librarian": that post, if we are to believe *The Times*, is already occupied by Mr. Alex Wilson in the Reference Division. They are looking for someone who must demonstrate proven managerial competence of a high order, and who will be expected to have had substantial

cover. An overall sense of the anatomy of Victorian fiction is harder to come by from his entries, more numerous though they are. Wolff provides the better directory, Sadleir the better guide. Neither man was particularly interested in "low" literature either of the pornographic or of the penny-dreadful kind. Nor is either collector attracted by the juvenile material, which forms the bulk of nineteenth-century fiction after 1870. Wolff is the stronger on books with a religious tendency. Sadleir may have the edge with Irish fiction. Both men have their uncanonical favourites. But Sadleir's literary judgments seem sounder than Wolff's, who had a famously aberrant partiality for the literary excellence of Miss Braddon.

On one level, this catalogue is a monumental gloating over treasure, honestly and ardently come by. As such, one can only reciprocate Wolff's proprietary triumph with awed admiration. But *Nineteenth-century Fiction* will be acquired by libraries as a reference book, and will be valued for its aid to research. As such it has great virtues and some damaging shortcomings.

Its main utility is in its comprehensiveness. Wolff's practice in acquisition was evidently haphazard. He bought books that he liked. But so wide-ranging were his likes (and so deep must his purse have been) that he trawled in a huge catch. To find a more inclusive listing of authors than is given here, one must go to the *English Catalogue*, or Allibone's *Supplement*. (The *NCBEL* is quite puny by comparison.) It is the longest letter entry in the volume under review, and Wolff gives us 260 author listings. The omissions I note are: Edward Arthur Haggard, Thomas Chandler Haliburton, Catherine J. Hamilton, Lillias Hamilton, M. Hamilton, Elizabeth Hardy, Elizabeth F.S. Harris, Frank Harris, J. Henry Harris, Miss C.D. Haynes, Lafcadio Hearn, Henry Henderson, Maurice Hewlett, Joseph Hocking, Annie E. Holdsworth, Denis Holland, Clemence Housman, Laurence Housman, Catherine Hubback, W.H. Hudson, Robert Huish, Sir William Wil-

son Hunter. Of these, I suppose only Hewlett, Hocking, the two Housmans and Hudson would be regarded as glaring. And many more authors that Wolff identified by the physical act of purchase would simply not be found in the sources I have used to turn up these missing names. Wolff's catalogue will be a mine for scholars. But its usefulness is curtailed by the compiler's fanatic attention to the book at the expense of the author of the book. Novels are described with loving attention to material detail: a soiled cover, a bubbled spine, a clipped title page are scrupulously inventoried. But the dates of authors are provided only where they are available from *DNB* or *CBEL*. A painless few hours among the early volumes of *Who's Who*, or Boase, for instance, would have yielded dates for Maria Hack, Lord Ernest William Hamilton, Iza Duffus Hardy, Henry Herman, Headon Hill (Wolff would also have discovered this is a pseudonym for F. Grainger), C. Lewis Hind, H.A. Hinkson, J.F. Hogan, Clive Holland, Tighe Hopkins, Peter Hay Hunter (Wolff would also have avoided the errors he makes about Hunter's collaborations with W. Whyte). As it is, Wolff leaves these and other authors in a condition of unmerited social-historical insignificance. They were not the nonentities this catalogue implies.

At times, Wolff seems to revel in a kind of scholarly insouciance to ascertainable fact. Sadleir (who could carry the offhand manner more easily) introduced his section on "Lieutenant Colonel Hort" (by whom he possessed five works) with the airy comment: "I can find no mention of this man in any work of reference", and does not even supply initials for the author. Andrew Block, in his useful but often unreliable catalogue, *The English Novel, 1740-1850*, lists seven titles by the mysterious colonel, but attributes them to Sir John Josiah Hort (1824-82). This follows an error in the British Museum Catalogue, which assumed that J. J. Hort was the anonymous author of *The Horse Guards* (1850), a work highly critical of Wellington. "Colonel Hort" was thereafter labelled by his publisher "author of *The Horse Guards*" and the error compounded itself. In fact, the author of *The Horse Guards*, and all the "Colonel Hort" books, was Richard Hort (1803-57), who left the army in 1848 with the brevet rank of lieutenant-colonel. (The other Hort did not make colonel until 1856.) Wolff has seven Hort titles (and has turned up another publisher). But he lists them under "Hort, Lieutenant-Colonel [Richard?] or John Josiah?" and gives no authorial dates. Wolff, who was a distinguished historian, could have cleared this up in half a day at the Widener Library. But one senses that he wished to keep up with Sadleir even in amateurism about "works of reference". It blemishes an undertaking whose

ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY AT A SENIOR LEVEL IN a public, academic, commercial or industrial organization". Librarians and information scientists will like to think that one or two of their number might just match those requirements and, indeed, the Civil Service Commission's memorandum hesitantly concedes that "experience in librarianship or information science could be an advantage".

Critics, even friendly critics, of the British Library, and indeed of all institutions, easily fall into what Geoffrey Crowther, the great editor of the *Economist*, called "the intellectual fallacy, the belief that a clear argument will be evidence of truth". The British Library's conclusion impeccably based on the soundest logic, can by itself, and without further human intervention, decide the matter. The British Library has not been guilty of such self-deception. No new institution in the United Kingdom has made a better start or accomplished more.

AUTHOR, AUTHOR

Competition No 159

Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than February 24. A prize of £10 is offered for the first correct set of answers opened on that date, or (failing that) the most nearly correct—in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration.

Entries, marked "Author, Author 159" on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX. The solution and results will appear on March 2.

1. He that will not work according to his faculty, let him perish according to his necessity: there is no law juster than that.

2. Most men, even in this comparatively free country, through mere ignorance and mistake, are so occupied with the fatigues of care and superfluous coarse labors of life that its finer fruits cannot be plucked by them.

3. I am looking forward to the time when men shall have nothing to do but lie in bed till twelve, read two novels a day; have nice little five o'clock teas all to ourselves, and tax our brains with nothing more trying than discussions upon the latest patterns in trousers.

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AMONG THIS WEEK'S CONTRIBUTORS

Julian Barnes is television critic of the *Observer*.
Edward Kaiman Brathwaite's long poem, *Sun Poem*, was published in 1982.
Vladimir Cerny's books include *Beyond the Urals: Economic Development in Soviet Asia*, 1967.
Robin Cornick is British Academy Reader at the Courtauld Institute of Art.
A. C. Dante's most recent book is *The Transfiguration of the Commemorative*, 1981.
Tom Ditch's most recent book, *Burn This*, was published in 1982.
R. A. Fletcher's study of Diego Gelmírez of Santiago de Compostela will be published this year.
Richard Gemm works for the Cathedral Advisory Commission for England.
Christopher Hope's collection of stories *Private Paris and Other Tales* was published last year.
Geoffrey A. Hocking is the author of *Beyond Socialist Policy: Soviet Fiction since 'Ivan Denisovich'*, 1980.
Roy Kridger's memoir *Real, Wicked Guy* was published earlier this year.
H. G. Koenigsberger's books include *The Hapsburgs and Europe 1516-1660*, 1971.
Gordon Leff is the author of *Dissolution of the Medieval Outlook*, 1976.
Wilfrid Mellers's books include *Beethoven and the Voice of God*, 1983.
Wolfgang Mommson is the Director of the German Historical Institute, London.
J. B. Morrell is Reader in History at the University of Bradford.
D. D. R. Owen's books include *The Evolution of the Grail Legend*, 1968.
G. N. Parker is Professor of Early Modern History at the University of St Andrews.
David Pryor-Jones's *Civil Confrontation: Journal and Memoir* was published last year.
E. F. D. Roberts is the Librarian of the National Library of Scotland.
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Anthony Sampson's books include *The Seven Sisters: the great oil companies and the world they made*, 1975.
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Norman Stone's *Europe Transformed 1789-1919* was published last year.
P. F. Strawson is Waynflete Professor of Metaphysical Philosophy at the University of Oxford.
John Sutherland is the editor of *Structuralism and Since*, 1980.
John Sutherland's *Fiction and the Fiction Industry* was published in 1976.
Charles W. Sullivan is the author of *Soldiers of Destruction*, 1978.